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The Perception and Impact of Countering Violent Extremism  
Programmes for Muslims in Sydney, Australia

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the  
University of Chester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by  
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## **Declaration**

*The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.*

*Signed: Claire McCaffrey*

*Date: 30/09/16*

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## **Abstract**

### **The Perception and Impact of Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives for Muslims in Sydney, Australia: Claire McCaffrey**

This thesis examines how the countering violent extremism initiatives implemented by the Australian government since 2011 have been received by Muslim communities in Sydney and the impact such measures have had, particularly, for those communities. Investigating the reception and impact of such initiatives both for and within Muslim communities, is vital in order to understand the scope of their reach and their efficiency. This thesis – addressing the lack of literature on this issue - will take the form of a case study of such programmes and their receipt by Muslim communities in Sydney, using primarily, qualitative research gathered through the use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews, as well as focus groups within Muslim communities in Sydney and policy reports gathered by both governmental and non-governmental bodies. Through an examination of the discourse adopted by the Howard government, in the period from 2001 to 2007, this study unearths and highlights the hostile, anti-Muslim environment in which the countering violent extremism measures were introduced. This environment was characterised by racism, negative stereotyping and vindication. Furthermore, through an analysis of this anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant narrative and discourse, the perceived threat posed by militant Islam to Australia and its interests constitutes both a process and discourse of securitisation by both the Howard government and the media. Data from fieldwork serves to evidence and reiterate the anti-Muslim undercurrent of Howard's discourse maintaining the suspect community narrative and culminating in the securitisation of the Muslim population. The poor receipt of these measures by Muslim communities and the detrimental impact in terms of further marginalisation, alienation, and suspicion are testament to the counter-terror discourse and the growth in community based counter-terror measures.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **The Topic**

In the wake of 9/11, a new environment emerged, not only in security terms but also in terms of social, political and economic changes. This new environment has been characterised by security concerns focusing on the rise of militant Islam. Furthermore, embedded within this new security landscape was the discourse and continuous reiteration of a global “War on Terror” (Gleeson, 2014). Within the geo-political circle comprising Europe, North America and Australia, measures were adopted and implemented to deal with this “new terrorism” phenomenon. Within this “new terrorism” phenomenon, there was recognition that the root causes of radicalisation needed to be addressed. Crenshaw (1981: 379) although writing prior to 9/11, recognised this stating that the study of terrorism was ‘organized around three questions: why terrorism occurs, how the process of terrorism works, and what its social and political efforts are’. In this light, counter-terrorism as well as countering violent extremism was catapulted into the defining feature of national and international domestic and foreign policy.

Academic and public interest increased surrounding this new security environment, and the need for this central focus on the phenomenon of terrorism. Questions were posed to the process of radicalisation and subsequently the rise of militant Islam (Gleeson, 2014). Indeed, great thought was devoted to the possible measures to deal with and curb this new threat. As such, vast amounts of literature emerged on these issues, ranging from focuses on the causes of radicalisation to counter-terrorism theories. Case studies too emerged looking at terrorism in the European context and particularly within the North American landscape (Kennedy-Pipe et al, 2015).

Whilst also included within the wider geo-political context and engaging in the so-called fight against terrorism through the implementation of robust and draconian counter-terror policies, there has been a dearth in academic literature on the situation and practices within the Australian context. Australia failed to be included in the analysis to the same degree as their geo-political counterparts aforementioned.

It is within this context, that security studies both within Australia and in a global landscape emerged. In terms of academic references and studies, counter-terrorism in this

context could be placed within that of critical security studies. The end of the Cold War saw the field of security studies search for new relevance. For instance, Baldwin (1997) opined that security studies had become a “cottage industry” that emerged around every new issue deemed a security concern. Thus, humanitarian intervention, identity formation and migration became encompassed within the scope of security studies. This broadening of the scope of security studies caused great controversy amongst advocates of broadening the field against those who are unsupportive. Indeed, the attacks of 9/11 only served to further reiterate such tensions. Rasmussen (2001: 113) contends that the way the security agenda that followed 9/11 has merely led to a ‘rerun of well-rehearsed positions makes one wonder whether the real outcome of the debate is to show how inadequate concepts based on the experiences of the past century’, are to describe the current security agenda. With this, too, lies Beck’s (1992) theory of risk society in that the industrial society has been concerned with the onus of production on goods but in today’s post-industrial society, decision making is concerned with prevention. It is within this situation; security studies find itself.

## **Overview of thesis**

The new security environment that emerged in the post 9/11 era brought with it a need for a new knowledge and understanding of “terrorism”. This knowledge and understanding had to address the ignorance surrounding the motivations and rationale of violent extremism and terrorism (Kennedy-Pipe, 2015). Emerging more prominently in this period, both within government as well as academia, was the need for local grass roots involvement in fighting violent extremism and combating terrorism.

The need for community engagement to aid in the fight against terrorism was becoming ever more prominent in both public and private discourse. The UK government following the attacks of 7/7 stressed the need for local involvement in combating violent extremism and countering radicalisation. The PREVENT strategy was developed and implemented with the aim of engaging local communities with authorities, in order to identify and address the root causes of violent extremism and to facilitate counter radicalisation (Gleeson, 2014). This led to the funding of local communities’ project with the aim of countering radicalisation and deterring violent extremism and terrorism.

Concerning this thesis is how these countering violent extremism initiatives emerged in an environment characterised by negative stereotyping and suspicion, and how they were

implemented in the Australian context taking the metropolitan city of Sydney as a case study.<sup>1</sup> It is interested in how the Australian government envisioned the rolling out and running of these schemes in theory, compared to how they actually operate in practice. Such a finding will highlight and draw attention to the contrasting and conflicting thoughts and ideas of the government with those at the grass-roots level. Moreover, this research seeks to identify, examine and analyse how these initiatives were received by local communities and how they were perceived. Uncovering the *modus operandi* of the Australian government in terms of their choice of counter-terrorism policies and practices in the period since 9/11 is a purpose of this study. This too reiterates the “risk society” narrative argued by Beck (1992) that governance and decision making are concerned with the prevention of “bads”. The environment in which such measures were introduced in terms of the negative anti-Muslim and immigration discourse, fostered and promoted by the Howard premiership from 1996 to 2007 is manifest in appreciating the context in which these programmes were introduced. Through a critical discourse analysis of John Howard’s political discourse post 9/11, justifications given for the implementation of such measures will be uncovered. Such an analysis serves to illustrate the implicit assimilationist agenda of the Howard era epitomised by a desire to reverse the politics of multiculturalism and promote what this period of Australian politics idealises as Australian identity.

The issue and concept of identity plays a pivotal role, both in responses from Muslim participants as well as underpinning much of the discourse and narrative of the Australian government, particularly under the reign of Howard. Howard, implicitly through discourse, fostered the mentality that the Australian identity was characterised by whiteness and that those who did not fit this categorisation could not really identify as “Australian”. As shall become evident, Howard did not favour hyphenated identities, rather he preferred one sole dominant identity: Australian. This was so that the Australian component or identity marker could not be diluted or suppressed by other components of one’s identity. Indeed, such an agenda and practice served to call into question the multicultural nature of Australian society and indeed the so-called policy of Australian multiculturalism. In terms of the above, questions arise as to the conceptualisations of these terms; how are they defined and are there different conceptualisations in different contexts? This will be the focus of the following sections.

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<sup>1</sup> This research is concerned with the metropolitan city of Sydney as a case study. Fieldwork was solely carried out in the Sydney area as this is where the largest Muslim population resides in Australia.

## **Definitional difficulties**

That the field of security studies and those concepts related are categorised by definitional difficulties is not novel. This thesis is not concerned with providing nor adopting a particular definition but rather strives to illustrate the contested nature and fluidity of terms associated with this field. Indeed, “terrorism”, as a term and a concept is without a universally agreed definition. Moreover, Schmid (2004: 7) contends, and as shall become clear; ‘terrorism is perhaps the most important word in the vocabulary of contemporary life’. As well as comprising the most important word according to Musgrave (2015), this concept remains essentially contested. Furthermore, Mabon (2015: 7) contends that the term “terrorism” is used as a ‘pejorative label for a particular type of political violence’. In order to appreciate this phraseology, there is a need to unpick and unpack what is understood as “violence”. Galtung in his 1969 work sought to explore understandings of violence in which he noted a narrow definition of violence that comprised, ‘violence is somatic incapacitation, or deprivation of health, alone (or killing as the extreme form), at the hands of an actor who intends this to be the consequence’ (6). Evident here is the requirement for both a subject and an object of the violence, where the ‘subject intentionally instigates an act of violence on the object’ (Mabon, 2015: 8). Galtung (1969) continues to develop a broader definition of violence that includes ‘cultural and structural violence, which has a clear impact on an individual’s ability to flourish as a human’ (Mabon, 2015: 8). The use of the term terrorism as an umbrella term with negative connotations is reiterated by Hoffman (1998: 31) as he states that terrorism is ‘a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one’s enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore’. The search for a universally accepted definition of terrorism is neither new nor more achievable. Indeed, as Mabon (2015) states, the quest for a universally accepted conceptualisation of terrorism has been compared by scholars in the field to the quest for the Holy Grail. Such scholars as Levitt (1986: 101) compared the quest to ‘eager souls set[ting] out, full of purpose, energy and self-confidence, to succeed where so many others have failed’.

Perhaps one of the most documented studies regarding the definitional complexities of terms such as terrorism is that of Schmid (2004). Finding no less than 109 different definitions between 1936 and 1990 highlights the discord evident within this field regarding conceptualisation. It is of no surprise therefore that in the era post 9/11 when the global security

environment changed and the issue of terrorism placed at the centre of local, national and international policy making agendas, there remains no single agreed definition.

Further definitional challenges are rife within this field of study particularly with reference to “radicalisation”. The term radicalisation has emerged and grown in popularity in the post 9/11 world. With reference to this growth, Schmid (2013: iv) contends that ‘the popularity of the concept of radicalisation stands in no direct relationship to its actual explanatory power regarding the root causes of terrorism’. In Europe, for instance, Schmid (2013) argues, the term radicalisation emerged within the academic arena following the Madrid bombings of 2004 and the London bombings of 2005. In terms of the definition of radicalisation, it has been suggested that ‘the causes of radicalisation are as diverse as they are abundant’ (Schmid, 2013: 1). With regard to the popularity of the term radicalisation as previously alluded to, its utilisation has become manifest alongside references to Islamic militancy and violence, in particular.

Indeed, it has been suggested that the very term radicalisation has become ‘a political shibboleth despite its lack of precision’ (Schmid, 2013: 7). Indeed, Kundnani (2012: 3) asserts, since 2004, the term “radicalisation” has become central to terrorism studies and counter-terrorism policy making’. As US and European governments have focused on stemming “home-grown” Islamist political violence, the concept of radicalisation has become the master signifier of the “war on terror” and provided a new lens through which to view Muslim minorities. The introduction of policies designed to “counter-radicalise” has been accompanied by the emergence of a government- funded industry which claims that ‘their knowledge of an ideological or psychological radicalisation process enables them to propose interventions in Muslim communities to prevent extremism’ (Schmid, 2013: 45).

Such a remark serves to substantiate the central argument that the Australian government through their use of the term radicalisation within their anti-Muslim discourse, sought to introduce and implement a wave of counter-radicalisation and countering violent extremism measures aimed at combating the threat of radicalisation framed to be severe and in need of control. Epitomising this were the introduction of the countering violent extremism programmes by the Australian government in a climate characterised by the Howard era’s dislike of multiculturalism as a means to address radicalisation within the Muslim minority population. The use of discourse and language therefore is paramount as a tool of power in

creating and maintaining the status quo as desired by the Howard government; that being a return to the prevalence and predominance of a single culture over other national and cultural identity markers (Shohat et al, 1994; 2003). Moreover, by using terms and concepts such as those mentioned above with negative connotations, as shall be explained later in subsequent chapters,<sup>2</sup> and by failing to adequately conceptualise and address the definitional complexities, Muslims were implicitly targeted because no condemnation was given to those who fostered such a negative connotation and mentality. Emerging here is the continuous reiteration of words and how their meanings can differ from person to person and within differing contexts (Gleeson, 2014). How language is used in terms of context can have a significant impact on how a message or narrative is perceived and understood. Moreover, language, as will become evident throughout this thesis, is a tool of the powerful that permits the acceptance and application of agendas by the public due to the framing of the language used as well as the actual language itself (Foucault, 1972). In this instance, the language used by Howard set the scene to serve as a justification for participation in the US-led war on terror as well as the introduction of Australian domestic counter-terror bills, reforms and community based countering violent extremism programmes. The narrative adopted was anti-Muslim in tone and comprised of recurring topics and issues such as immigration, national identity, the incompatibility of some migrants to Australia, asylum seekers and terrorism. As shall be addressed later within this thesis, through discourse a process of linking was used by the Australian government in order to try and relate asylum seekers and terrorism and to create an idea of a related problem between asylum seekers and terrorists; particularly Muslims. In order to fully appreciate the use of discourse by Howard in the Australian government with regard to their counter-terrorism portfolio, discourse analysis was adopted to identify and unearth their implicit agendas.

Such an insight into how, exactly, the Australian counter-terrorism portfolio emerged in such a rapid fashion with a particular focus on the countering violent extremism programmes introduced by the Australian government in the area of Sydney, would foster an unearthing and appreciation of the motivations and agendas of the Australian government in the current post 9/11 era. This thesis seeks to identify and unearth such motivations and question how such agendas and motivations became manifest in Australian society.

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter 5 on discourse pp 114-141 for in depth analysis of these terms.

The issues and topics of terrorism, violent extremism and particularly Islamist extremism have taken centre stage both in academic arenas and in policy documents in the post 9/11 world (Lutz, 2008). As such, there exists a wealth of literature, studies and reports on all issues within this field ranging from the root causes of violent extremism through to best counter-terror practice and how disengagement from terrorist activity occurs. There is a tendency however for such academic work to focus on the European context or the US situation more than other areas of the world. Indeed, academic research is evident within the southern hemisphere in the Australian context on terrorism and violent extremism but it is less substantial than that which is concerned with the European and US context (Aly, 2007; Gleeson, 2014). Nonetheless, since 9/11, the academic interest in terrorism within Australia has grown and continues to do so. Much of this work has been concerned with the process of radicalisation and the factors that can lead to radical behaviour (Aly, 2007; Bastian, 2012). As well as this, there has been important research carried into the so called multicultural nature of Australia and how indeed, migrants fit into and flourish in such a society (Day, 1998; Burke, 2001; Gelber and MacDonald, 2006; Gleeson, 2014). Through a process of linking, these two fields are presented as related to each other that perhaps a society less favourable to multiculturalism may indeed be a factor that can be said to relate or entice an individual to violent extremism.

This thesis too is concerned with such a relationship. Where this research differs, however, is that through primary research focusing on Sydney comprising Australia's largest Muslim population, how Muslims within Sydney perceive Australian society in terms of its multicultural nature and the impact of this is offered. A sample of the Muslim population is therefore given a platform to voice their opinions and concerns regarding Australian society as well as how this society is impacting their everyday lives which is often lacking in academic research. In addition to this, how this sample of the Muslim population within Sydney perceives the countering violent extremism programmes adopted by the Australian government as a means of addressing the threat posed by violent extremism within Australia is offered. How such programmes are affecting and impacting on the everyday lives of Australian people is extremely important in determining the efficiency of such programmes. This thesis seeks to do so through primary data collated through qualitative research with a sample of Muslims who reside in Sydney. Whilst academic work has been conducted with regard to Australian counter-terror measures, this work focuses on the evolution of Australia's counter-terror portfolio and advances this work by offering an insight through the collation of qualitative

primary data into how such measures affect the day-to-day lives of a sample of Muslims within the metropolitan City of Sydney.

An examination of the relationship between community practitioners and authorities is crucial as it serves to identify and highlight the conflicting motivations and objectives of governments in comparison to local communities. With this, this thesis aims to address the issue of community engagement within the Australian context. Through engagement with Muslim community activists, this thesis seeks to investigate the assertion that community engagement is in fact intelligence gathering. Related to this too, in terms of community engagement, is the desire of this thesis to draw awareness to the nature of the community engagement model adopted by authorities within the state of New South Wales. Examining such a model will serve to identify how authorities view extremists in terms of their position in society as well as show how authorities believe extremists can be reached within and through local communities. This thesis thus is concerned with highlighting the nature of community engagement as a tool in counter-terrorism and identify, through research data, how community engagement can indeed be counter-productive in improving community relations and ultimately combating violent-extremism. As well as this, this thesis, again through participant insights and narratives, seeks to highlight and draw awareness to the structural differences that are evident within Australia at policy level with those at community level. Such an insight is crucial both as a lesson in engagement and communication between a government and its people as well as within the government itself. Indeed, this thesis serves to contribute to the understanding of the working of governments and those structures that are in place responsible for creating and implementing initiatives to be run at grass roots level. In this light, this thesis too can be seen to contribute to theories of best practice in government structure and relations. Therefore, such identification will foster an appreciation of the context in which these countering violent extremism programmes are based.

As such therefore, this thesis does not strive to revolutionize this academic field but rather to build on existing knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, through a study gathering primary data in Sydney, this thesis strives to highlight the complexities of countering terrorism and the negative impact such measures can have. This primary data serves to highlight that within the Australian context, the range of counter-terrorism measures adopted were done so in haste without proven need, according to a sample of those whom these measures were implicitly and explicitly implemented for. Whilst previous research has looked



at the need for the yield in Australian counter-terror measures, this thesis contributes to knowledge due to its primary data evidence.

## **Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

### **My Experience**

Coming from Northern Ireland, I understood the Catholic-Protestant conflict and could see that on the surface, it was a fight between “Catholics” and “Protestants” – in reality however, it was not about religious beliefs but rather about identity and what that identity symbolised; English Protestant colonialism and Irish Catholic oppression. Unlike the conflict at home, I could not comprehend the basis, motivation or justification for 9/11 and global reactions to it. How those in power would deal with such a situation and those involved and the measures implemented to deal with such individuals would affect them was a question and thought that resonated with me. How would the wider population of Muslims be impacted by the domino effect such counter-terror measures would have? In what way do Muslims view counter-terror measures and what do they perceive as being useful in fighting terrorism? My own biography in terms of my religious affiliation and what this symbolised in terms of my national identity were perhaps causes of such thoughts. Being Irish and Catholic, invited negative connotations that myself and my family, were somehow inherently violent and that we liked to “fight with and kill our neighbours”. This mentality of suspicion and fear should not have surprised me. Negative media coverage as well as government rhetoric and discourse justifying military intervention because of the IRA who were ‘Irish and Catholic’ tarnished all Irish Catholics as members and supporters of the IRA. This narrative depicting all Irish people as supporters of a military movement led me to question media coverage, government rhetoric and narrative. Growing up and as acts of terrorism became more global and more frequent, I found myself wanting to interrogate media coverage and government legislation in relation to the post 9/11 war on terror. Such thoughts and questions formed the basis of this research.

The Australian component of this thesis emerged from my first year in Sydney where I worked as a research assistant in the Law Faculty of the University of New South Wales but particularly when engaged with the Muslim organisation where I was given the opportunity to immerse myself within a Muslim institution and participate in its activities. Indeed, it was within this capacity that I came across a newspaper reporting on the funding available for countering violent extremism schemes. I began to think and question the introduction of these

measures; the timing and the context, their potential impact. With this my research interest question and case study was born.

As the nature of this topic and research is sensitive and can be uncomfortable for some, a number of issues of ethical content were encountered in the collection of data.<sup>3</sup> Due to having previously been to Sydney and working with Muslim individuals who were highly regarded within Australian Muslim communities, friendships, relationships and a rapport was built within communities. It was therefore assumed that contacts were in place for the second trip to Sydney; this time to conduct fieldwork.

Prior to returning to Sydney, a list of all Muslim organisations, charities and community groups were contacted via email which stated my interest in collaborating and working with Muslim communities. Of these 84 emails contact, prior to departing Ireland, I had received no replies. Although based within an academic institution in Sydney immersed within the terrorism field, gaining access to both government and security personnel as well the Muslim population was becoming virtually impossible. No responses to emails or phone calls nor presenting myself at the offices of these individuals sought a positive outcome.

In conducting field-work on such a topic that can be sensitive for some, it is important to be reflexive and aware of how one's own biography can impact on the collation of data. Due not only to the nature of the topic I was seeking to study, but also my personal circumstances such as gender and national identity, access to participants proved challenging. With these identity markers, an element of strategic manoeuvring was adopted. For instance, with my dual nationality, I flew to Australia on my British passport due to the reciprocal health agreement but whilst in Australia, I learned that my Irish-ness would grant me greater access. Questions as to my religious affiliation such as was I a Catholic or Protestant when I responded saw the subsequent question as to whether I was British or Irish. I learned that Irish as a national identity fostered more opportunities. Related to this, was my Caucasian appearance and ultimately was one issue of access in terms of overcoming suspicion and building trust.

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<sup>3</sup> This research went through University College Cork Ethics Committee and ethical approval was granted prior to arriving in Australia and beginning fieldwork. Consent form is added as Appendix 1.

This component of my identity on its own raised some concerns. For instance, I was asked on different occasions as to whether I was a spy for the Australian government and then for the Irish government by one participant of this research. This question was posed because I come from outside the Muslim community as well as the point I am a white European non-Muslim researching Muslims; a sense of distrust was evident as well as a degree of fatigue at being research subjects. Despite this initial discomfort, I built trust and rapport with this individual through our common interests such as travel and holidays, movies as well as academic research interests. Having such commonalities served as a basis of a relationship that fostered trust and a strong rapport.

After some months, I received a response from a community leader who was interested in meeting with me because I was from Ireland and he had some questions about Dublin. A little bemused but rather flattered, I began the train journey to another Muslim populated suburb. As we began to talk, I found myself questioning my own stereotypes and challenging my own anxieties, even though this was only the third Muslim I had met in this context on my own. Following our discussion, I came away with a knowledge that no book could teach, a sense of the passion that some have for their local community and their desire to protect their community.

Although meetings were held and more contacts emerged through a process of snowballing, resulting in the collection of intriguing data, some meetings were tainted with elements of adrenaline, excitement and a sprinkle of anxiety. A further layer of my identity which offered research opportunities and access to participants but also fostered difficulties is that of gender. Examples of such elements were being followed by two men around a suburb which resulted in a police escort home rather than taking public transport, as well as being brushed up against and invited back to a house. Obviously, such experiences were due to my gender but also perhaps due to being a white European female. Indeed, literature is abounding documenting experiences of white, non-Muslim European female researchers (Schwedler, 2006). Within this literature are arguments and references made to the idea that there are some, who perceive non-Muslim, white European female researchers as promiscuous. To deal with such situations, Schwedler (2006) puts forward the argument that reversing this mentality depends on the individual and their ethical stance. My ethical stance allowed me to overcome this stereotype and form a professional relationship. Therefore, negotiating personal

relationships can be challenging and difficult, and there is a need to be careful in becoming friends with research participants particularly in ethnographic research.

Having being offered the opportunity to meet for lunch with one male participant with the promise of gaining more access to the Muslim community I accepted. Subsequent meetings were had with lunch, breakfast and even a trip to a shopping centre to observe how Muslims engage in this setting. However, time was passing and the promise of further contacts was not being fruitful. As well as this, conversations were becoming more personal with questions as to my private life. With this, emails were sent which ended with personal statements of affection I felt were inappropriate. In replying, I made no references to, nor acknowledgement of such remarks. Perhaps not returning such pleasantries or taking up such advances was the cause of no further access to participants. My failure to act on such advances therefore negated my access to some Muslim participants; particularly those who were in receipt of government funding. Hence my ethical stance and my desire to not engage in an uncomfortable relationship, further frames and contextualises the data I was able to gather given the circumstances I found myself.

As previously alluded to, the issue of trust was central in collating this research data therefore, building a relationship and a rapport with these individuals was crucial. A further example of building a rapport is wearing the niqab to the local village accompanied by other females. I wanted to put myself in the shoes of these ladies and experience for myself. Despite the stares, the unaccommodating looks and the muttering under the breath about me, I felt a great sense of freedom that no-one was looking at me or my appearance- I felt a sense of comfort, ease and liberation. Indeed, understanding the role of women in Islam and in particular the wearing of the veil is crucial in appreciating the daily lives of these individuals (Scott-Baumann, 2011). It is these experiences and circumstances therefore that shape this thesis in terms of the nature of the data collated and the context in which this was granted. The building of this trust and a good rapport took time comprising of spending time in the company of these individuals prior to interviews having lunch with them and their friends, shopping with their families and sharing our goals and desires. Doing so allowed potential participants to become more familiar with me and garner a better understanding of who I was and what I was about. Sharing our interests and goals highlighted our similarities which served as a basis on which our rapport grew culminating in the sharing of personal experience. The above

contextualise the data and the findings of this research and also determined the methods adopted to gather data.

## **Methodology**

In order to do the above, there was a focus on gathering and collating primary research data through fieldwork in Sydney.<sup>4</sup> Fieldwork was conducted so as to research about the lived reality of living in a hostile, anti-Muslim environment. Participant observation was adopted within this fieldwork approach so as to seek a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Harvey, 2011:221; Stausberg, 2011). Focus was placed on gathering fresh data, as well as addressing the research questions and hypothesis posed. The methods adopted to undertake this research were qualitative in nature comprising of unstructured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a case study of Sydney. Quantitative methodologies such as surveys and questionnaires were not used in this research as they did not fit the research design that sought to collate and understand feelings, narratives and attitudes (Navarro-Rivera and Kosmin, 2011: 395). Audio recordings were not used within this research as a means of collating data. Due to the sensitive nature of potential issues under discussion, the use of recording apparatus may have caused unease among participants and their willingness to engage. However, for this research, notes were taken during and post interviews where the respondents' key and most interesting quotes were included verbatim. There were 61 individuals engaged with as part of this research; 32 of which were male and 29 of which were female. Eleven of these were police and security personnel and government representatives. Subsequent to overcoming difficulties gaining access to Muslim participants through the use of two gatekeepers, who were young Muslim men and who introduced subsequent contacts based on their engagement with local communities; the other 50 comprised of Muslims including community leaders and activists, religious leaders, community members, countering violent extremism practitioners and academics. Within this sample, were migrants to Australia as well as converts. Countries of origin comprised Australia, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Pakistan. Governmental documents including census data and surveys, legal documents and governmental policy reports were utilised. Secondary data was also sourced from other academic works and social researchers.

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<sup>4</sup> A fieldwork diary was not kept during this research but notes and observations were made during these interviews. The material gathered during fieldwork through note taking was stored in a locked safety box to which only I had access in a secure, alarmed apartment. This material included notes I made during fieldwork.

A qualitative approach was adopted fostering methods which would create an environment that would encourage narrative and story-telling rather than short, non-descriptive responses as would be collated using methods favoured by quantitative methodologies. As well as this, qualitative methods were favoured to allow the identification of similarities and differences within responses, therefore resulting in the identification of themes within and throughout the research. A number of qualitative research methodologies were therefore employed.

Primarily, this piece of research was based on a case study design (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 36). This was to allow an investigation and exploration in great detail and great depth. With regard to this method, the study must relate to a particular aspect of the case as addressed within the research questions; in this case the focus was countering violent extremism initiatives and their impact on a sample of Muslims in Sydney. Case selection is rather important as it must produce data that will enable and permit addressing the research question. The case chosen must therefore be relevant. Indeed, Yin (2003) cites various criteria to decipher the type of case study. In this case, revelatory case study is most applicable as it is the focus on a particular case, which has the potential to shed light on the research topic; that is countering violent extremism initiatives highlighting how these impact on a sample of the Muslim population living in Sydney. Moreover, and in relation to this, is the research design utilised for this research. This is an ethnographic study as it fostered the researcher 'spending time immersed within the research context, seeing and hearing the data at first hand' (Matthews and Ross: 2010: 135). Essentially, ethnography fosters the researcher engaging 'in the field or the natural setting' (Matthews and Ross: 2010). In line with this piece of research, ethnography does not seek to substantiate or disprove theories. Indeed, the definitions, paradigms and theories are the means; they help us to understand the data. As such, the data are not the means to the end, they are the end (Atkinson et al, 2009). As well as this, Clifford and Marcus (1986) suggest that ethnographic writing is determined and characterised in a number of ways. Within this research, the ways ethnography is written according to Clifford and Marcus (1986) are applicable in terms of the purpose of this research, i.e. contextually in that it draws from meaningful social milieu and also institutionally as this research was written within specific audiences, that is Muslims residing in Sydney. An ethnographic approach was adopted as it complemented the case study approach of this research fostering 'a deeper understanding of the culture of the group, organisation or community' (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 135). Indeed, this is gained through the observation of how individuals construct their own social meaning

in everyday life. Focus groups foster an important insight into ‘how meaning is negotiated, how arguments are defended and re-evaluated’ (Bremborg, 2011: 313). In addition, a comment by Matthews and Ross (2010: 135) reiterates the compatibility of an ethnographic approach to this research stating: ‘there must be a focus – a research question to address – which may be related to the way people interact, what hierarchies can be observed in the way people work together and how participants organise themselves’. Essentially, Geertz (2000:154) contends that ‘the ethnography of thinking is an attempt not to exalt diversity but to take it seriously as itself an object of analytic description and interpretive reflection’. Such a methodological approach was therefore adopted as a means of addressing the research question at hand here: how are countering violent extremism programmes perceived and what impact do they have on Muslim communities in Sydney.

. Within this research, in order to gain access to participants, a number of sampling techniques were used. Initial targeting of participants was characterised by the scope of this research in terms of the metropolitan area of Sydney. As a result, therefore, cluster sampling was utilised as this research was concerned with one geographical area; Sydney (Robben and Sluka, 2006; Scott Baumann and Cheruvallil-Contractor, 2015). Having established the locale within which access to participants was sought, further methods of sampling were adopted so as to recruit respondents best suited to address the research questions. As such then, a sample was sought which comprised of individuals of the same characteristics; i.e. Muslim, reside in Sydney, above the age of 18. In addition, participants of similar characteristics were pursued deliberately with the purpose of gaining access to participants who would foster the exploration of research questions. Seeking to engage such individuals is fraught with difficulty however due to the negative and stereotypical environment evident within Australia. In order to address difficulties with access, Scott-Baumann and Cheruvallil-Contractor (2015) suggest establishing trust in order to make positive relationships which can result in effective data gathering. For this research, trust was established through the building of a positive rapport by spending time with potential participants to allow our similarities and common interests to flourish. Illustrative of this, is the positive rapport and trust that was enabled through my sustained, persistent contact and dialogue with potential contacts by arranging meet-ups, lunch and coffee breaks, that over time developed trust and sustained relationships. As McCutcheon (2005: 115) notes however, one must be careful not to become too engrossed with our participants as this can affect the quality of the data collated. Furthermore, it is necessary to protect those whom we seek to research, particularly in this field characterised by a highly-

politicised environment. As a result of this, care and caution is required so as not to create any adverse media coverage nor unwanted attention (Scott-Baumann and Cheruvallil-Contractor, 2015). The former methods were made possible through snowball sampling whereby the initial contacts made, were then asked to identify others who may be suitable to the case study. Gatekeepers were used as avenues through whom to invite participation and were two Muslim males met at an Islamic Awareness event in Sydney. A rapport was built with these individuals after establishing common interests in travel and international relations. These individuals then, through their community network invited their contacts to meet with me to see if a relationship could be formed. Those whom participated in this research were those who were contacted through the methods outlined and agreed to participate.

With this contact made and access was granted to participants, in order to engage with these individuals, interviews of both a semi-structured and unstructured nature were utilised.<sup>5</sup> Semi-structured interviews were used as a means as Matthews and Ross (2010: 220) suggest gathering ‘people’s experiences, behaviour and understandings and how and why they experience and understand the social world in this way’. As well as this, qualitative interviews allow an understanding and appreciation of people’s beliefs and attitudes (Bremborg, 2011). Essentially, this research is concerned with the content of the interview and the conversation as well as the language and narrative the participant uses in expressing themselves. In light of this, semi-structured interviews were a favourable methodological choice encouraging participants to discuss the topic using their own language, whilst encouraging depth in conversation.

Alongside these semi-structured were unstructured interviews. This approach was adopted primarily at the beginning of the conversations to make the individual feel at ease and allow them to begin talking about a topic they felt comfortable with before moving on to a more guided and directed conversation. Both these interview techniques were used in settings of the participant’s choice; whether that in a public sphere or a more private area in order to make the participants feel at ease and more comfortable in engaging in conversation. As well as these methods, in order to observe how these individuals interact with each other and how they communicate about such issues, five focus groups were conducted. These focus groups comprised individuals ranging from five to twelve people; both male and female. Within these

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<sup>5</sup> All interviews and communication with participants were conducted in English.



focus groups, participants discussed their thoughts, opinions and attitudes on issues related to terrorism and counter-radicalisation initiatives. Such groups emerged through snowball sampling and comprised programme practitioners and participants as well as community members not engaged with these initiatives. Moreover, such a methodological approach allowed participants to use their own words and language to express their thoughts; this, of course a central component of this thesis. As well as this, focus groups offer the researcher the opportunity to listen to and observe the interaction and debate that is unfolding. As Matthews and Ross (2010: 236) suggest with regard to collating data comprised of meanings and understandings, focus group allows the identification of experiences by ‘listening to, observing and recording their discussion and the way the groups work with the topics issues’. As well as this, unlike a one-to-one setting, a focus group gives participants the opportunity to challenge one another’s thoughts and attitudes. These were the methods adopted to gather primary data essential for this research. An in-depth and detailed discussion was central to this research epitomised by an analysis of the meanings, beliefs, opinions and attitudes of participants (Clifford et al, 1986).

Within this thesis, further primary sources utilised were news items, policy documents and other qualitative data. Documents such as those utilised as Matthews and Ross (2010: 278) offer a snapshot of a particular time, e.g. newspaper articles and reports. In addition, documents according to Matthews and Ross (2010) ‘are socially constructed: this means that they can tell us more than just the data and information they contain’. This too is significant for this thesis as it is argued that a suspect community is indeed a social construct. Although such material is useful, caution is also needed with regard to its authenticity and if it is dated, there is the possibility that the data may no longer be relevant. Nonetheless, used in conjunction with one another, the primary data combined with the secondary sources serve to complement each other and offer a well-rounded data set.

## **Theoretical Approach**

Within this thesis, knowledge is garnered from two particular sources; official knowledge from power sources such as governments and authoritative knowledge, which comprises empirical knowledge which is based on available research evidence. This is fresh data that has been collated in order to test hypothesis and answer research questions which can be checked via further subsequent study. Indeed, caution needs to be taken with this knowledge and the question of how we know what we know. The caution needed here will be illustrated throughout this thesis when looking at the role of discourse used by those in power. For many, the source of knowledge is the government or the media and, as shall be illustrated, the “truth” may not always be manifest (Foucault, 1972). Hence, caution needs to be exercised when looking at sources for knowledge particularly regarding the social world.

With this is the question of viewing the social world and what we know about this social phenomenon. Matthews and Ross (2013: 25) put forward the argument that the ‘social phenomena making up our social world are only real in the sense that they are constructed ideas which are continually being reviewed and reworked by those involved in them (the social actors) through social interaction and reflection’. Indeed, Matthews and Ross (2010: 25) continue, ‘there is no social reality apart from the meaning of the social phenomenon for the participants’. This is precisely what this investigation is concerned with - that is how do participants understand the social world around them and of which, they are a component. Indeed, it is essentially these meanings and the understandings of this social phenomenon, in this case countering violent extremism initiatives, which were constructed by social actors such as the government for the Muslim population in Sydney which is the remit of this research. This thesis is interested from a constructionist viewpoint in the meaning of these initiatives for the participants involved; how are these programmes perceived and what impact do such perceptions and meanings have not only on their personal well-being but also on their community relations and social interaction with wider Australian society.

The nature of the social world, as understood by this thesis, impacts on the methods used to gather knowledge about the social phenomena found in this social world. The epistemological position adopted for this research is that of interpretivism, which seeks to

prioritise individual subjective interpretations and understandings of social phenomena.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, for this research there is a focus on the understandings and experiences of social phenomena which is not directly observable by the senses, but rather can be interpreted by a fellow individual. This epistemological position is related to the ontological vein of thought of constructivism where the understandings and meanings ascribed to the social phenomenon depict the nature of the social phenomenon. Blaikie (1993: 96) contends that,

‘knowledge is seen to be derived from everyday concepts and meanings – the social researcher enters the social world in order to grasp the socially constructed meanings and then reconstructs them in socially scientific language. At one level these latter accounts are regarded as re-descriptions of everyday accounts; at another level, they are developed into theories’.

The social world is socially constructed, and to understand this social world is to decipher and identify the meanings held by social actors using an interpretivist approach. Although constructivism and interpretivism are the dominant basis of this research, realism too offers relevant ideas. Realism contends that social reality exists outside the realm of the social researcher but also contends that ‘the apparent social reality is underpinned by invisible but powerful structures or mechanisms. These mechanisms are not directly observable but their effects are apparent so these can be gathered and used to provide evidence of the underlying structures or mechanisms’ (Matthews and Ross: 2010: 29). Further evolving the realist approach; the critical realist approach has emerged which is concerned with power and power relations. Matthews and Ross (2010: 29) assert that the critical realist framework is interested in ‘identifying structures or mechanisms that result in inequality or injustice and thus offers the opportunity for social change by changing or negating the structural mechanisms that are identified as having these impacts’. Terms such as “advocacy” or “participatory” research refer to approaches that study the social world from the viewpoint of ‘groups of people whose understandings and experiences of the social world have been ignored or hidden’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 35). Moreover, research utilising such a theoretical framework may ‘focus on the discourse or language that is used by other people, who are perceived to be more powerful, to describe the group’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 35). Such theoretical frameworks are

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<sup>6</sup> For further analysis on Interpretive Anthropology see Geertz et al, 2000; Local Knowledge, Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology.

relevant as this thesis is interested in the power of language adopted by the Australian government to promote and maintain an anti-Muslim discourse, using negative language and connotations to describe the Australian Muslim population, and result in the introduction and justification of counter-terror measures, including a countering violent extremism initiative targeting the Muslim population. As well as this, such critical theoretical frameworks epitomise ‘the empowerment of the research subjects and research that will challenge current discourses and practices and initiative change’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 35). Such a comment too is relevant with regard to this research in seeking to identify as well as challenge the hidden agenda behind anti-Muslim discourse which resulted in measures implemented to “deal with” the Sydney Muslim population.

Indeed, critical realism sits alone as it does not fit comfortably with an interpretive or constructionist viewpoint as it stresses the identification of knowledge that is real, yet unobservable except for its impact. This is relevant for this thesis as it refers to the visible impact on Muslims that one can observe of these countering violent extremism measures implemented by those in power. Essentially, critical realism is concerned with revealing hidden structures and mechanisms as well as uncovering power relations and dominant ideologies. Interpretivism and critical realism are both relevant to this research as subjective meanings are regarded as important and the interpretation of these meanings within a specific context that is Sydney, Australia. The uncovering of power relations and dominant ideologies such as that of the Australian government and local Muslim communities as well as their dominant anti-Muslim discourse are crucial to this research. Essentially, in this thesis discourses are constructed and in this way, adopt a constructionist viewpoint. However, the power relations underpinned by these discourses are real and need to be made explicit by adopting the critical realist approach.

As social research, this project is concerned with exploring a social phenomenon and seeking to ‘understand and explain how and why the phenomenon is understood- as it is’ (Matthews and Ross: 2010: 31). This research is concerned with theories emerging at two different levels; that of the meso-level and that of the micro-level. This research is neither concerned nor interested in macro or grand level theories which seek to include every aspect of the social world, due to the fact that this research is interested in a specific aspect of social life and phenomena. Rather, this research characterises a meso-level theory as it relates to and is concerned with ‘social phenomena [...] such as organisations, institutions, community and

family' (Matthews and Ross, 2012: 33). Within this thesis, such phenomena comprise governments, the Muslim population itself, community groups and Muslim families, religious and ethnic organisations. At the micro-level which focuses on specific areas, groups of people or aspects of the social world, this research is concerned with the geographical locale of Sydney as well as Sydney's Muslim communities and individual Muslims. As such therefore, recurrent themes can emerge when looking at a specific aspect of the social world, in terms of thoughts and meanings ascribed to particular situations and circumstances, for instance, the meaning of countering violent programmes for Muslim communities. The themes are recurrent issues which emerged through conversations with participants of this research. Conversation analysis as an analytical tool was not utilised for this research, however as audio recording was not adopted. Nonetheless, through the analysis of conversations facilitated by this research, how the interactions of others are viewed and explicated became clear and stressed the effect inter-religious interactions can have (Lehtinen, 2011). Recurrent issues and concerns were also stressed and became apparent through the analysis of these conversations.

The appropriate analytical tool for this research is that of thematic analysis. Grbich (2007: 16) asserts that a 'thematic analysis is a process of segmentation, categorisation and relinking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation'. In terms of the practicalities therefore, sifting through the data resulted in the identification of initial themes such as threat level not being genuine as well as the idea of a suspect community. Essentially, as Matthews and Ross (2010: 373) suggest 'start with each respondent's words and then put them alongside the words of their respondents, or the contents of a series of documents' which will then allow the creation of an index or categorisations of initial themes. Essential within this process is staying in touch with the "raw" data. It is important to refer back to the data and the categorisations made to check conceptualisations and interpretations. Having identified themes running through the data, this thesis then began to look at ways the key themes recognised were related and as Matthews and Ross (2010: 379) state, 'explore possible similarities and differences between cases'. Within each of the initial themes, creating further sub categories was useful to identify how these relate to other sub themes as well as initial and key themes. In presenting this analysis, this thesis is structured accordingly with each key theme taking a chapter but each chapter and theme is inter-related and interwoven to create a flowing and coherent argument.

Using such a framework then, this thesis seeks to identify how the countering violent extremism programmes implemented by the Australian government are perceived by a sample of the Muslim population living in Sydney. As well as this, how such programmes impact the lives of these Muslims and such measures affect their daily lives will be highlighted. By doing so, this thesis strives to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of counter-terrorism policies and practices and draws awareness to both the advantages and weaknesses of such measures.

## **Chapter Outlines**

### **2. Muslims in Australia**

This section will identify the origin of Muslims and Islam in Australia and note its evolution to the present day. The place of Muslims within Australia as well as their contribution to Australian society will be stated. The diverse, dynamic nature of Muslims in Australia will be explored. The place of Muslims and their treatment within Australia as members of Australian society will be discussed offering an insight into the so-called multicultural nature of Australia and contestations around it. The identity formation and racialisation of Muslims will be addressed fostering an appreciation of the context in which Australian Muslims reside.

### **3. Counter-Terrorism Policy Post 9/11 in Australia**

In order to highlight the sea change in counter-terror (CT) policy post 9/11, an exploration of CT legislation prior to 9/11 in Australia will be conducted. An analysis of the legislation introduced in the aftermath of 9/11 will draw attention to the reactionary nature of subsequent Australian governments and their consequential policies, as well as highlight the issue of turning Muslims into a “suspect community”. This chapter will also examine the leadership of John Howard from 1996 to 2007 under which these C.T. laws were implemented and how the persona of this leadership influenced support for such policies. Such a practice will highlight the securitization of Islam in this period. The above will set the context for the introduction of the Countering Violent Extremism grants.

### **4. Countering Violent Extremism Grants (CVEs)**

This chapter will provide the political backdrop and introduce these CVE grants as well as explain their origin, aims, objectives and target audience. The purpose of these measures will be analysed as well as an examination of the justifications offered for such implementation. The mechanisms through which these grants work; that are the application process and how successful applicants are selected will be addressed. A critical examination of the process and mechanisms surrounding these grants will then follow.

## **5. Discourse and Language**

This chapter will critically engage with the discourse in the CT field through an examination of the key concepts and language used such as “radical”, “extremism” and “resilience”, by the Australian government in its CT policies such as these CVE initiatives. This chapter will examine the conceptual problems with such terms and highlight the differences between community and government/policy conceptualisations. The impact of such terms and language on the Muslim communities will be analysed and highlighted here through primary data. The role and power of language and narrative will be highlighted here to stress the importance of discourse to those in power in terms of creating support for their cause. How this power was manifest will be explored within this section.

## **6. CVE and the “Suspect Community”**

This section will examine the role CVE has had in re-enforcing the idea of suspect community both to and within the Muslim population. It will investigate how these CVE programmes and their targeting of the Muslim population has fed into the anti-Muslim and Islamophobic discourse. This chapter will further refer to and reiterate arguments alluded to within this thesis concerning the place of Muslims in Sydney in particular and how this impacts their environment as well as the role of discourse by those in power in creating and maintaining the suspect community idea. Indeed, how Muslims conduct themselves in terms of their identity formation with reference to being categorised as part of a suspect community will be explored. Such illustrations will be made through the incorporation of fieldwork also evident in previous chapters.

## **7. CVE and Identity Formation**

This chapter will examine the impact of these CVE programmes on the identity formation of Muslims in Sydney. It will investigate the role these CVE initiatives have in shaping the identities of Muslims living in Sydney. Furthermore, this section will highlight how these individuals cope with the hostile environment in which they find themselves and what mechanisms are endorsed to accommodate a comfortable way for life for these individuals. This will be illustrated through primary data. This chapter will also note the generational complexities related to identity formation.



## **8. Conclusion**

This chapter will again highlight the aims of this study and its main findings. It will offer a summary of the main arguments of this thesis. This chapter will also draw attention to lessons that can be learnt from this Australian case study in terms of counter-terror and counter-radicalisation policies. This chapter will also make recommendations for further research and investigation.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Muslim Settlement, Racialisation and Identity Formations in Australia**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will examine the place of Muslims in Australia and aims to fulfil two purposes; firstly, it will contextualise this topic and set the scene for the other chapters of this thesis. Secondly, this chapter will provide a literature review of discourse in this area. It will begin by providing an analysis of dynamics and contestations of Australian national identity and its symbols whilst simultaneously identifying the different approaches to immigration from the “White Australia Policy” to multiculturalism and their relation to definitions of Australian national identity. The issue of racism in the Australian context will be identified whilst its presence will be evaluated throughout Muslim settlement in Australia. An overview of the history of Muslim immigration and settlement in Australia will follow leading to the issue of identity markers and the tension between ethnic and Islamic identity markers which appear to remain a serious difficulty for Muslims in the Australian context. The social marginalisation faced by Muslims as a possible consequence of their migration will be analysed with the possible relationship between social marginalisation and racism addressed. The place of Muslims in contemporary Australia will be examined through an analysis of complex identity formations, as well as an investigation into the experiences of racialisation of Australian identity and racism.<sup>7</sup>

#### **From “White”, to Multicultural Australian National Identity?**

‘Australia is an English colony’ is the opening remark in a 1958 volume entitled ‘The Australian Tradition’ by Arthur Phillips. This very first statement illustrates the point that Australia owes itself to England and all things English. Phillips (1958: 58) continues, ‘its cultural pattern is based on that fact of history’. Furthermore, ‘direct English inheritance determines the general design of our living and much of its detail, from our enthusiasm about cricket to our indifference to the admirable wines which we produce’ (Phillips, 1958: 58). This

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<sup>7</sup> This chapter serves to contextualise the emergence and settlement of Muslims in Australia. It does not seek to offer an historical account of Muslim migration to Australia. This research is social scientific research centred on contemporary Muslim populations. As such, the historical account utilised is based on secondary research, merely to highlight the growth of Muslims in Australia.

association and relationship between Australia and its White European history as well as Britain is continuously postulated due to the composition of the Australian flag. Bastian (2012) too notes this relationship asserting ‘one prominent factor that promotes the Australian = White association and therefore acts to racialise the Australian identity is the current Australian flag’. The Australian flag composition has changed many times but has always had the Union symbol. It was not until 1953 however, that the current flag became the national flag. The British Blue Ensign constituted the final change to the flag in 1953; further reiterating the strong association between Australia and Great Britain (Phillips: 1958). Baker (2012: 5) with regard to the Australian flag asserts that the flag is a constant reminder of the ‘tradition, heritage, loyalty and dependence to the British Empire’. Furthermore, in terms of the Southern Cross, it is one of the most visible constellations in the Southern Hemisphere and from the beginning of the colony, has been used to represent Australia. It has been argued that perhaps the colonists identified with the Christian connotations in that the Cross represents Christ and the idea that God was watching over Australia (Bastian, 2012). Bastian (2012: 57) asserts that this reminder that one must have an affiliation with Great Britain to be Australian is of course true for those White European settlers who arrived from those very shores, ‘but what of the Italian and Greek and post Second World War diverse refugee population who came to Australia or families from Vietnam’. These individuals may not necessarily identify with Britain but they *do* with Australia. As Bastian (2012: 57) notes ‘the inclusion of the union jack on the Australian flag suggests that Australians who can trace their family origins back to Britain, are the “original Australians”.’

Thus ‘Britishness was the necessary foundation for Australian nationalism’ (McGregor, 2006: 351). It has been further suggested that this was a myth used in the federation period between 1890 and 1915 to unite Australians. The introduction of the “White Australia” policy which favoured “whites” and excluded “non-whites” became the official immigration policy from the federation (1901) through to the end of the 1970s. Australian national identity under this policy, was constructed upon ‘inherited concepts of ethnicity, race and religion – Australians were British, white and/or Anglo-Saxon and Christian’ (Davison, 2008: 2). Violent struggles with indigenous peoples on the Frontier, ‘the experience of mixing in neighbourhoods, workplace and in political parties, the perception of the Asian threat to the Australian racial and national interests contributed to the consolidation of a common white British ethnicity’ (Hirst, 2002: 11-23). Racial myths of hardy, courageous bushmen dominated conceptions of Australian identity with the bushman finding a ‘potent reiteration in the Anzac

legend of the Australian soldier during World War One' (Moran, 2011: 2157). Ideas and values associated with these myths such as egalitarianism, "mate-ship" and courage in the face of adversity continue to resonate with Australians. For instance, the Anzac legend remains a powerful national myth reflected in a resurgent emphasis on Anzac Day; Australia's *de facto* national day, more powerfully resonant than the official Australia Day. However, "White Australia" became an issue for Australian governments in terms of anti-racism, anti-discrimination and de-colonisation movements post-World War II. 'British influence too was becoming diluted and weaker due to factors such as the decline of the British Empire, Australia's need to engage with Asia and the growing need to include Aborigines in the nation' (McGregor, 2013: 110). Mass immigration following World War II from countries outside former British dominion such as Italy, Greece, Germany and Turkey contributed significantly to Australia's ethnic, language and religious diversity. However, these migrants were expected to succumb to the dominant individualising and secularising process of modernity and leave their original cultural identities behind (Humphrey, 2011: 36). This became known as a period of assimilation. 'Immigration was supposed to be an instrument of development and nation-building premised on assimilation into "White Australia"' (Humphrey, 2006: 36). Demographic, social and cultural changes including the emergence of ethnic leaders and social movements as well as intensifying Aboriginal activism in the 1960s, meant that 'a new national narrative highlighting Australia's multi-ethnic, multicultural and indigenous origins began to circulate therefore challenging the myth of British origins' (McGregor, 2006: 508).

The 1950s saw the beginning of the dismantling of the White Australia Policy. By the 1970s it has been suggested, Australia was officially committed to removing racial discrimination from its policies (Moran, 2011: 2159). The 1970s saw a 'political narrative stating that the assimilation policy was failing, leading to the policy of multiculturalism receiving bipartisan political approval as the best policy for managing immigrant integration' (Moran, 2011: 2159). In the same way that the White Australia Policy was dressed as a means of nation-building in Australia, the multicultural idea was too. When multicultural policy emerged in the early 1970s, 'political statements emerged claiming "multicultural Australia"; what this meant for national identity was implied rather than addressed' (Moran, 2011: 2159). The National Agenda declared that 'it is the vigour of our diversity, and the degree of interaction between different cultures, that contributes so much to the uniqueness of the Australian identity today' (Office of Multicultural Affairs 1989, 6). British heritage however was given a prominent place. The importance of British heritage was noted with the recognition

that its customs and institutions needed to adapt and change to respond to the needs of a more diverse population than previous, but no such recommendations were made. Rather, British influence was praised; ‘...it helps to define us as Australian...it has created a society remarkable for the freedom it can give to its individual citizens...it is a potent source of unity and loyalty’ (Office of Multicultural Affairs 1989, 50-1). Moran (2011: 2160) however suggests that the ‘conception of this British heritage de-emphasised the ethnic elements whilst simultaneously signifying its civic and institutional elements’. Since the 1980s in some official documents and other social commentary when the significance of ‘Australia’s British origins and character are asserted, it is typically in this inclusive and civic rather than ethnic sense of Britishness; and it is assumed that anyone can partake of that culture regardless of ethnic or racial origins’ (Moran, 2011: 2161). The Howard era (1996-2007) adopted the term Australian multiculturalism to emphasise the predominance of Australian unity over difference whilst signifying that ‘Australian multiculturalism will continue to be a defining feature of our evolving national identity’ (Moran, 2011: 2161). Many argue that this policy of multiculturalism has succeeded as it has ‘been a highly integrative policy, encouraging interaction between different people and fostering a sense of Australian identity’ (Moran, 2011. 2162). Other measures of success are that qualitative studies show diversity and multiculturalism are numerous cited when people describe Australia and Australians (Cleland, 2011). A study focusing on urban and rural Victoria found that participants saw ‘multiculturalism helped transform “Australian-ness” into a distinctive Australian identity and that it is a significant component of contemporary Australian identity’ (Lentini, Halahoff and Ogru, 2009: 347). It would appear therefore that Australia has shifted from an exclusive racially based White Australia Policy to an inclusive multicultural policy since the 1970s. The encouragement of Australian political leaders and the day-to-day experiences of mixing within Australian society can perhaps be identified as some influences contributing to the apparent success of the multicultural project.

Australia however has not been free from controversy and heated debate over immigration, multiculturalism and national identity. The 1980s and 1990s saw race debates about Asian migration as well as related debates critiquing multiculturalism. Multiculturalism was described in the 1990s as a ‘recipe for ethnic conflict and warring tribes within the nation state’ (Blainey, 1991). Moreover, multiculturalism was regarded by some as exclusive rather than inclusive as ‘it makes difference, instead of sameness the basis of social incorporation’ (Humphrey, 2011: 37). In addition, the lexicon of multiculturalism differentiates and values cultures differently according to undeclared criteria; for instance, “migrant” in Australia means

non-English speaking member of the unskilled working class whilst “multilingual” means speaking “migrant” languages (Humphrey, 2011: 37). Furthermore, the Howard Government (1996-2007) whilst confused about multiculturalism in its first term (1996 – 1998), ‘cutting funding for ethnic provisions, reaffirmed its commitment in 1999 and again in 2003 before deciding in 2006 that it would no longer promote multiculturalism because of its alleged divisive connotations’ (Moran, 2011: 2165). Following this in 2007, a supposedly necessary citizenship test for immigrants was introduced as immigrants were coming to Australia from new source countries that were perceived to have different and opposing values, norms and beliefs to that of mainstream Australia. This required a means through which migrants would fully integrate into Australian society (Moran, 2011). The events of 9/11 too had a role to play in this rhetoric adopted by Howard and his government. Linking national identity to the issue of militant Islam, Howard’s uneasiness with the concept and practice of multiculturalism was given ‘new licence as he could claim that it was the duty of all Western leaders to hold the line against those who would demand “cultural concessions”’ (Moran, 2011: 2165). A strong national identity was therefore essential. Crucial to protecting Australia against the threat of militant Islam was a strong, unwavering national identity; for in the eyes of Howard, Islamic extremists calculate ‘that it is in the nature of western societies to grow weary of long struggles and protracted debates and who produce over time a growing pressure for resolution or accommodation’ (Howard, 2008, cited in Moran, 2011: 2166). Standing firm on national values despite both explicitly and implicitly vilifying migrant communities, thus became vital in the fight for survival.

A thread running through this literature therefore regarding the immigrant phases and social policy of Australia is that of racism.<sup>8</sup> Racism is a historical and complex societal problem among settler societies such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US. In these countries, immigration has long been a significant factor in population growth and importantly, ‘where the wide range of national origins of more recent immigration streams has resulted in increasingly ethnically diverse populations’ (Forrest and Dunn, 2006: 699). Yet each of these nations is different. For instance, the 1960s in the US saw the emergence of a “White Nation” and a potential future divide between “Blacks” and “Non-Blacks” (Rose, 1997). Prior to the 1960s Canada had issues around a cultural pluralism with two charter groups, English and French. However, Canada has gone further than other immigrant receiving countries mentioned

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<sup>8</sup> See subsequent chapters on suspect community pp. 143-165 and discourse pp. 114-140 for further discussion of these issues.

in ‘enshrining multiculturalism legally and constitutionally during the 1980s’ (Helms-Hay and Curtis, 1998: 258). Contemporary Australian society is often characterised as increasingly multicultural, yet it is still struggling to extricate from a legacy of Anglo-privilege and cultural dominance.

1901 saw the implementation of the Immigration Restriction Act which later became known as the “White Australia Policy” and lasted until the early 1970s. The experience of those Post World War II immigrants, particularly from eastern and southern Europe during the 1950s and 1960s – as opposed to those of English-speaking background (British and Irish) immigrants who had dominated migration for 50 years prior to 1950s was marked by discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage (Bastian 2012; Moran 2011; Forrest and Dunn 2006; Helms-Hay and Curtis 1998). Post White Australia immigrants from Asia, particularly Muslims along with Indigenous Australians, came to be ‘especially identified as key “Others” in the national imaginary’ (Rizvi 1996: 176 -177). Non-whites were excluded as they were deemed incompatible with what was “Australian”. Racisms included Anglo-Celtic cultural dominance, intolerance of diversity, antagonism towards some cultural groups and xenophobia. These issues and the mass migration from many countries led to the recognition there was a need to become more inclusive and welcome different cultures. This led to the abolition of the White Australia policy and the adoption of the multicultural project.

Multicultural Australia was committed to removing racial discrimination from its immigration and social policies. It appears, however, that whilst the elimination of racial discrimination is the aim of this multicultural policy, it has not reached the ground. There is a strong sense of “the Other” and suspicion felt towards those who are regarded as incompatible with the values held by ‘proper Australians’ (Moran, 2011: 2168). Muslims are the most vilified of these groupings in the contemporary context (Moran, 2011). This is despite their long immigrant history to Australia as well as their growing presence within the Australian nation.

### **Muslim Immigration and Settlement in Australia**

The Muslim population in Australia can be traced back for at least two centuries. Mass immigration following the 1970s has given rise to the numbers of Muslims in Australia and has led to the vast Muslim population that resides in Australia today. Despite their large numbers (476,000 of the 21,507,000 Australian population as of 2011), Muslims in Australia,

still at the present time are forbearers of serious deprivation and discrimination. Issues of poor integration into the wider Australian society have had a domino effect on issues such as social and economic status, attitudes towards wider Australian society as well as the Muslim population, identity issues and multiculturalism. Some scholars suggest that limited as it was, the early 'sporadic contact made no impact on Australia until the Muslim presence was transformed into a permanent settlement in the second half of the 19th century' (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 228). This shift had significant implications for the self-perception of Muslims in Australia in that they believed it may be possible to make this vast landscape a permanent home.

The first known contact between Muslims and Australia was around 1650 although the 1803 encounter with outrigger Muslims from Macassar who visited 'the coasts of Marege, extending from the east of Darwin [who] arrived to catch and process a sea slug called Trepang for the Chinese Market' (Cleland, 2011: 13) is noted as the beginning of such meetings. Australia was to become the home of many European and later penal settlers. Port Jackson, which is today known as the Sydney harbour, saw the arrival of many of these early European settlers, and it was here, not on the mainland that was the location of the first European settlement in Australia, 'that Australia had its next encounter with Islam' (Cleland, 2011: 13). The nature of this encounter appears to have been that of a hostile one (Akbarzadeh, 2011). Little was recorded of these "exotic" arrivals but these men left 'no Muslim families that we know of, no institutions and no mosques' (Cleland, 2011: 13). Perhaps these Muslim men changed their names or assimilated into the primarily Christian Australian society or left after earning enough money for their passage home. It is certain however, that they would have suffered from considerable religious intolerance as the British Test and Corporation Acts which were a series of penal laws served as a religious Test for Public Office, and imposed various civil disabilities on Catholics and non-Conformists, were not repealed until 1828. (Cleland, 2011: 14).

From the years 1840 to 1880, European settlement spread throughout the continent. This period coincided with the first phase of Muslim settlement in Australia, as suggested by Akbarzadeh (2011), which existed around the 19th century. These individual Muslim settlers found it extremely difficult to maintain their religious identity in this period. Isolation from both the mainstream Australian society as well as their country of origin led many of these Muslims to shed or conceal their religious background. Individual Muslims in the 19th century



found it increasingly problematic to exhibit their religious identity whilst simultaneously being welcomed and accepted into the larger Australian society. This first phase of identity formation by the Muslim population in Australia was thus characterised by ‘the presence of atomised Muslims and the absence of a Muslim society’ (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 230).

It was not until the arrival of the Afghan cameleers that a small Muslim population began to emerge. It was these Afghans who set up small umma<sup>9</sup> or “Muslim communities” known as ‘Ghantown’ and the first mosque was built in Australia in Broken Hill, NSW, in 1887. Furthermore, by 1898, the ‘Muslim population in Coolgardie numbered 300 members with 80 on average, attending Friday prayer’ (Cleland, 2011: 17). Steady migration thus followed with increasing numbers of Afghan cameleers. Despite a significant number of Muslims now residing in Australia, these Muslims were subject to racism and deprivation. Clear cases of racism and even murder against Afghans were dismissed by racist courts (Cleland, 2011: 17). Furthermore, local press outlets declared Afghans to be more ‘detestable than the Chinese and attacked them for opening their own stores and butcher shops’ (Cleland, 2011: 17). These Afghans were seen as cheap labour as Unionists regarded ‘economic exploitation as inextricably linked to “racial inferiority”’ (Cleland, 2011: 17). From the early 1890s on, debates were occurring on the issue and possible eradication of the ‘coloured labour’ problem. From 1897 then, it became difficult for “aliens” to enter the country (Cleland, 2011: 18). A move away from an atomised Muslim presence was then signalled by the arrival of Afghan cameleers and their establishment of local “Ghan” towns which created a sense of a Muslim community and symbolised growth. In the early 20th century, Muslims in Australia, as a whole, constituted less than one percent of the total population, totalling 3,908 in 1911 and 2,704 in 1947 (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 230). The picture emerging of this Muslim component of Australian society in the period between the early 1900s and 1947 is one of impermanence (Cleland, 2011: 19). Furthermore, many of those who were credited with leadership ‘appear to have been illiterate, signing documents with a mark, although there were some with Islamic knowledge’ (Cleland, 2011: 19). Muslim women at this time did not constitute a significant number of the Muslim population in the Australian outback. For instance, mosque records for Western Australia in 1898 reveal that ‘not one woman was counted; no marriages or rituals were performed therefore reflecting a relatively young, celibate and transient population’ (Cleland, 2011: 21). However, despite the odds many of the Afghans in the outback did

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<sup>9</sup> Academic transliteration of Arabic terms was not used as this is uncommon in sociological and anthropological research on contemporary Muslim minorities in a Western context.

eventually marry. Many of the women these Afghans married were ‘marginalised Aborigines whose tribal social system was disintegrating under the impact of white settlement’ (Cleland, 2011: 22). Furthermore, some of these women were ‘impoverished European women such as widows with several children, deserted wives and occasionally gold-diggers who were attracted by the wealth of established camel owners’ (Cleland, 2011: 22). Adventurous young men were coming to Australia to earn money and then return home. Personal documents held in the National Archives of Australia reveal that these young men were ‘mainly under the age of 30 with unskilled occupations such as ploughmen and farmers’ (Cleland, 2011: 24). Albanian men worked in the cane fields of Queensland and many became ‘orchardists and market gardeners, building a prosperous population in the countryside’ (Cleland, 2011: 24). Muslims felt a need to come together when possible, emphasising their common points and down-grading their differences in order to maintain their Islamic identity and a sense of cohesion. This is noted as the second phase and is characterised by ‘the emergence of a truly multi-ethnic population of believers or *umma* due to the increasing numbers of Afghan cameleers and their families’ (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 230). National identity in this phase did not pose a significant challenge to the ideal of a unified *umma* in Australia, because of its novelty for many Muslims. Significantly, this apparent emergence of *umma* indicated an understanding among Muslims that their lives in Australia were not transitory. It was being transformed into a second home and by implication, an accommodating land. However, this shift was one-sided as it was not mirrored in the attitudes and reactions of the Australian mainstream society. Settlers from Muslim backgrounds were tolerated but not regarded as a permanent feature of Australian society.

The implementation of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901 by the Australian government made immigration to Australia extremely difficult. The passing of this legislation ‘resulted in a rapid decline in the arrival of “non-white” people, including Muslims, into Australia during this “White Australia” period’ (Kabir, 2008: 1279). Even those who had called Australia home for many years prior to these policies and were eligible for citizenship, were refused and sent “home” (Pakulski and Tranter, 2000). Racism and discrimination were again evident in the attitudes towards the Muslim population. For instance, a dictation test was required to enter Australia in this period and could be in any European language. As Cleland (2011: 18) asserts, ‘in practice, this meant any language that could not be understood by Muslims’. Indeed, it was widely believed in the Australian nation that being “Australian” meant

“being white”. Therefore, those who did not “fit” under this racialization were seen as not conforming to the ideal national identity of Australia.

It was primarily not until after the Second World War and subsequent to the revised Migration Act of 1958 that migration of Muslims began again. However, this mass immigration policy initiated in 1947 was not designed to create a culturally and religiously diverse society. Immigration was supposed to be an ‘instrument of development and nation-building premised on assimilation into “White Australia”’ (Humphrey, 2011: 37). 1966 heralded the announcement that applications for entry of well qualified people would be considered on the basis of their suitability as settlers. However, accompanying this was the statement that ‘the changes of course are not intended to meet general labour shortages or to permit the large-scale admission of workers from Asia’ notes Cleland (2011; 26). From 1967 to 1971, 10,000 Turkish migrants arrived as they were needed to address the labour shortages. Muslim groups began to appear in every Australian city and were predominantly of Lebanese (due to the Civil War in Lebanon in the 1970s) and Turkish descent.

The 1950s saw the establishment of the first Islamic societies in New South Wales with representation from all ethnic groups in the Muslim diaspora. For example, the Islamic Society of Victoria established in 1957, had representation from the Arab, Turkish, Yugoslav and South Asian Muslim communities and remained a multi-ethnic society until well after the establishment of the national organisation; which in fact was a religious organisation fostered on national links (Cleland, 2011: 27). Although ethnically based Islamic societies were springing up in the 1950s, Muslim immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds sought ‘to build a degree of unity amongst the family members of Islam’ (Cleland, 2011: 27; See also Dunn, 2010, and Jakubowich, 2011). However, this was not to be the case. The establishment of ethnic organisations and bodies for each ethnic background such as the Lebanese Council of New South Wales, the Turkish Muslim Council and the Afghan Muslim Council created a sense of Other within the Muslim population and a separation from one another. It has been argued by many such as Bouma et al (2011: 39) that the ‘most obvious expression of the ethnic pluralisation of “Australian Islam” is the retention of ethnic or national designation in the titles of Associations’. This is illustrated by the diverse nature of New South Wales where of the 21 members of the Islamic Council of New South Wales, seven still identify their ethnic or national origin (Bouma et al, 2011: 39). This idea of separateness is furthered by Bouma et al (2011: 38) who assert that the diversity and scope of Islamic religious and legal institutions in

their countries of origin have also helped to reinforce the ‘organic, communal and ethnic character of Muslims immigrants rather than encourage centralisation under a single Islamic authority’.

By 1975, the social reality created by the diversification of migrant origins and settlement process led to “Multiculturalism” replacing “White Australia” as official national policy. By 1981, about 17,000 Lebanese Muslims had settled in Australia (Cleland, 2011: 26). These immigrants gravitated to the largest urban centres which offered employment in the manufacturing and service industries. The 1980s saw the largest increase in the Muslim population as Kabir (2008), Jakubowicz (2007) and Dunn (2010) note, ‘in 1947 the Muslim population in Australia was 2704, in 1981 it rose to 76,785 but by 1991 the Muslim population had reached 142,666’ (Kabir, 2008: 211). The majority of these Australian Muslims, according to the 1991 Census were urban based as 50% resided in Sydney and 32% in Melbourne. Overall 93.21 % lived in State capitals (Cleland, 2011: 26). Migration and settlement in Australia has been an overwhelmingly urban phenomenon. Moreover, these migrants neither assimilated nor dispersed throughout the country but remained concentrated in large cities; Sydney and Melbourne in particular (Humphrey, 2011: 36). Migration had therefore turned the city, not the nation, multicultural. The subsequent phase in the development of Muslim identity in Australia suggested by Akbarzadeh (2011) is characterised by the increased growth of numerous ethnic groups since the abolition of the White Australia Policy. In this period, mosques had a significant role in that they provided assistance to new settlers and facilitated with the surrounding society. This shift signifies another qualitative shift in Muslim identity (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 231). Similar to the way ethnically mixed congregations contributed to the ideal of an *umma*, the growth of ethnic congregations tends to also detract from it (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 231). This has thus led to the increasing influence of ethnic and sectarian forms of Islam among Muslims in Australia. Associated with this development, is the growing popularity of the community of language which serves as the pillar of the national ideal as well as the fusion of religious and national identities. Therefore, the Turkish community favours attending Turkish language sermons in Turkish mosques. This nationalisation of Islam has resulted in a de-facto fragmentation of the imagined Muslim community. ‘The ideal of a national population in the Muslim world and its demarcation in the late 19th and 20th centuries by colonial powers further complicated the concept of Islamic identity’ (Saeed and Akbarzadeh, 2011: 4). In the time post the implementation of the multicultural project, it can be argued that the identity of the Australian nation has changed. Arguably, a level of acceptance has been reached with those

immigrants being welcomed into their nation (Saeed and Akbarzadeh, 2011). Whilst these migrants have been welcomed to a certain extent, there is an expectation among the wider Australian population that these migrants conform and uphold the values and beliefs held by the majority of Australians. What is thus called for is the process of assimilation and the diluting of any characteristics that do not fit under the banner of “Australian” (Pakulski and Trantor, 2000: 15).

### **Identity formations among Australian Muslims**

In terms of identity markers, there appears to be tension between that of a national/ethnic identity versus that of a global Islamic identity. This section will look at this tension and will then examine the place and experiences of a sample of Muslims in Sydney and how they construe their identities.<sup>10</sup> Some scholars suggest that identities are formulated through that of a bi-cultural identity. Gregg (2007: 19) through his study of identity formation tries to demonstrate that bi-cultural individuals can master shifting identities between cultural frames with relative ease. Bi-cultural identity of a self therefore becomes a dynamic system ‘defined by recognisable opportunities and constraints’ (Melucci, 1997; 64). ‘Identity is both a system and a process, because the field is defined by recognisable opportunities and is simultaneously able to intervene to act upon and restructure itself’ (Kabir, 2008: 5). Two significant and confounding problems come to the fore here; the issues of the continuity of the self and the boundaries of the self. ‘Synchronistically, the difficulty is one of deciding where the subject begins and where it ends; diachronically, it must be established how this subject persists through time’ (Kabir, 2008: 5). Bi-cultural identity straddles the bonds of belonging such as ‘kinship or local and geographical ties and is therefore more flexible and can move through both independent and interdependent collectivistic stances’ (Melucci 1997; Kabir 2008: 6).

Scholars such as Noble et al (1999) and Saeed (2011) suggest that ethnic identities too, are ‘cultural constructions, not primordial or biologically given as “common-sense” understandings imply’ (Noble et al, 1999: 29). Mass immigration to Australia in the post-war period was on a larger scale and from a more diverse range of sources than elsewhere in the world, therefore in this context, ‘race, culture and ethnicity have become increasingly important in contemporary social formations’ (Noble et al, 1999: 30). Gregg (2007) suggests that globalisation and mass migration have encouraged new forms of ethnic identification which

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<sup>10</sup> Identity formation is examined in more detail and uses respondent reports in Chapter 7, pp. 166-189.

emphasise localism and ‘bounded’ cultures. Noble et al (1999: 30) assert that there exist two seeming contradictions here. First, these forms of identification constitute “new ethnicities” ‘which symbolise population amongst a migrant population whose experience has been heterogeneous’. Secondly, these new forms of ethnic identification involve ‘active self-fashioning, but in response to conditions over which they have little control’ (Noble et al, 1999: 30). Gilroy (1987) argues that ethnic identities within migrant communities are fashioned out of known symbols and practices but in ways which represent new cultural forms. Furthermore, Hall (1992: 255) reiterates notions of the problematic idea of bi-culturality by contending that ‘syncretism and hybridity are constitutive of the identities of migrant communities, and fluidity characterises the boundaries between them, even as they assert cohesiveness’. The above serves as a criticism of the simplistic bi-cultural approach, instead favouring a multi-faceted process of identity formation.

However, it must be noted claims that although the ‘nationalisation of Islam and the consolidation of national identities among Muslims in Australia may be a dominant trend, it is not absolute’ (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 232). The converse ideal of an *umma* is represented through the existence of what Akbarzadeh (2011) terms supra-national groups such as the Muslim Population Cooperative of Australia who aim to serve an imagined Muslim community regardless of ethnic or national divisions. For instance, in 1974, a delegation from Saudi Arabia arrived to investigate the needs of the local Muslim community. Dr Kettani, who was advisor to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, encouraged a new approach to national organisation to ‘overcome the ethnic divisions which were causing grave concern’ (Cleland, 2011: 27). Kettani made four recommendations in order to achieve the previously stated aim which firstly involved the gradual elimination of Islamic Societies based on ethnic, national language, racial or sectarian grounds. Secondly, the establishment of Islamic Societies on a purely geographical basis in each State was recommended. The formation of an Islamic Council in each State or Territory to represent the entire Muslim population of that State was the third recommendation and the final recommendation, was the association of those State Councils into a federation at national level (Cleland, 2011: 27). Only the last two of these recommendations made almost 40 years previous have been implemented. Furthermore, despite this, the Islamic component of identity is never far below the surface as is evident through Islamic weddings and funerals. Islam, however, is merely a component of a significant larger national identity. Akbarzadeh (2011) suggests that Islam does not dwarf pride in national identity but rather feeds it and in so doing, detracts from the ideal of a supra- national Muslim unity. Islam is a vital component of

these national identities and it would be impossible to discuss these national groups without taking account of the Islamic component (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 234). This serves to refute the bi-cultural argument given at least three components of Islam, ethnic identity of country of origin and Australian identity.

Despite representing a growing proportion of Australian society, those Muslims engaged with in Sydney recall encountering serious social difficulties. These challenges are compounded in a diaspora that is diverse and disunited as well as suffering from a lack of language skills. The Muslim population faces a multitude of difficulties in a supposedly Australian multicultural society; 'intergenerational poverty, under education and employment, a pressing need for more social, welfare and aged-care services and a siege mentality fostered by a suspicious public' (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 231). Chakravatory-Spivak (1988) too asserts that minorities are marginalised and their voice is suppressed therefore their concerns and issues are not dealt with. A lack of representation in the political arena and a lack of the provision of services are also concerns raised by participants in Sydney, as is evident through the words of Sydney's Lebanese Muslim Association president Samier Dandam who states in relation to mosque building, 'we do not want any more mosques; that is my message to the scholars; we don't need any more mosques. We want services' (Dunn, 2010: 341). Furthermore, Dandam asserts that Muslim leaders are faced with the contentious issue of building the infrastructure needed to serve the growing population, such as more Islamic schools and youth centres. Moreover, this expanding population 'is afflicted by entrenched socioeconomic problems that fuel alienation and resentment' (Akbarzadeh, 2011: 132). The Muslim population has a comparatively youthful age profile, with some 51% below the age of 25. The 2010 Census records show that 11% of Muslims had yet to begin school, 31% aged between 5-18 years and a further 9% were the relevant age for tertiary study (Clyne, 2011: 118). The Muslim youth population consists of a significant number of under-achievers compared to the Australian national average. The small percentage of the Muslim population is employed in low or unskilled employment with the majority of the Muslim population unemployed. The vast majority of Muslim families live in poor suburban areas in Muslim majority towns and villages for instance Bankstown and Greenacre in Sydney's west.

Hence, the place of Muslims in contemporary Australia, particularly post 9/11 is one of tension and negotiation. Given the young age profile of Muslims in Australia, studies have considered identity dynamics among Muslim youth. Kabir (2008) looking at identity formation

in Australia found the importance of western influences such as television programmes, sports, media and music significant for Muslim youths. Moreover, these respondents were open to commenting critically on their parents or the wider Muslim population, thus portraying their individual thoughts. In terms of the intensity of the level of identity according to these formations, Kabir (2008: 211) asserts that this 'bi-cultural identity was less developed among the overseas-born new arrivals to Australia'. Whilst keen to retain some aspects of their cultural heritage, especially their religion, Australian born respondents shared a greater sense of affiliation with Australian practices. Layers of identity: familial, tribal, provincial, national and Islamic are evident and each of these can become essentialised in particular circumstances. Kabir's (2008: 9) study, proposes two ideas; one is that 'Australian Muslim youth identity is in the process of development; and two, if bi-cultural identity is the outcome it is likely to be beneficial to these youths and the host nation in allowing multiple layers of identity formations'.

Others however, offer a more complex analysis of identity formation by Muslims in the Australian context. Through their study of male Arabic-speaking youth in South-western Sydney, Noble et al (1999) assert that the process of identification formation is a complex process dependent on social surroundings. Their findings support Hall's (1992: 254) assertion that identities are strategic and positional; 'they mobilise cultural resources through practises of accommodation, negotiation and resistance in relation to economic and political processes'. Moreover, Spivak (cited in Stokes, 1997: 231) notion of a 'strategic essentialism'- the articulation of an irreducible otherness, which are operationalised primarily for the critical speaking position it offers minority intellectuals- is also applicable here. Noble et al (1999) suggest that what their study highlights is the pivotal importance of how ethnicity is articulated in relation to identity. This is crucial because both groups (those of Christian belief and those of Muslim belief), share a sense of ethnicity as unproblematic, despite their flexible approach to it. For these youths, ethnic identity is essentialised and taken as a given. A participant of Syrian background who socialised with those of Lebanese descent in the study conducted by Noble et al (1999; 36) states that 'everything I say is Lebanese...Culture has a lot to do with my personality. You always bring it out, every second word'. It is interesting that the former asserted Lebanese identity despite his Syrian background; this is perhaps illustrative of the practice of hybridity in the diasporic context. This essentialism is strategic in that it has a 'contingent personality' (Brah, 1996: 149) - it has both the stabilising qualities needed to make identity workable and yet is malleable enough to suit different functions. There was also



awareness amongst these individuals regarding the different sense of what it is to be Lebanese than that held by their parents (Noble et al, 1999). Moreover, Noble et al (1999) found that the Muslim boys were clearer about the emphasis on religious traditions in defining their ethnicity. This strategic essentialism therefore ‘rests firmly on a process of mapping, whereby identification of the group’s Lebanese-ness is secured only by positioning it against others’ (Noble et al: 1999: 37).

Therefore, Muslim youth perception of ethnicity is located in a system of differences. These boys produced a mapping of identities which involved categorisation, both of self and other, through which their sense of identity is deployed. Marginalised groups it is suggested mobilise such ‘processes to define themselves and map their identities onto a larger, ordered system of difference in the day-to-day management of plurality’ (Noble et al, 1999: 37). Moreover, the selves that these boys fashioned in response to different contexts reflected a high degree of plurality, in other words a strategic hybridity (Noble et al, 1999: 39). It is important to note that essentialism and hybridity are not dichotomous strategies. Hybridisation rests on the maintenance of a clear sense of distinct elements (Baumann, 2001). This hybridity is most functionally evident in the code-switching and code-mixing, the movement and mixing of two languages, that many non-English-speaking background youth engage in (Bhabha 1990, Rampton 1995). Thus, hybridity can encompass a strong degree of ‘assimilationism’, although not necessarily to the dominant culture (Noble et al, 1999). Ethnicity therefore, is fluid and shifting depending on context, topic and relations; it can vary across home, school and leisure, whether relations with others are involved, whether they are Asians, teachers or girls (Brah, 1996). This idea of fluid and shifting ethnic identity markers has been suggested as a reaction and as a means of dealing with racist behaviour. Such a practice is evident within comments from respondents in dealing with the suspect community narrative that stereotypes Muslims as “terrorists”.

### **The Racialisation of Muslims in Australia**

Kobayashi and Peake (2000: 293) define racialization as the process by which groups ‘are identified, given stereotypical characteristics, and coerced into specific living conditions’. Moreover, these authors add that this often ‘involves social or spatial segregation or otherwise racialized places’ (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000: 293). It is worth noting furthermore that this process ‘need not operate through supposed racial differentiation (genetics, skin colour etc.),

but can also operate through asserted cultural features, such as religious performances' (Dunn et al, 2001: 44). Such a sentiment was noted by participants of this research,

‘we are the victims of racist behaviour because not only of our looks but because of how we pray, when we pray, our religious practices and pilgrimages’.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the academic scholarship on racism and racialization in the Australian context, references are made to what has been termed “old racism” and “new racism”. Whilst these terms appear frequently in Australian scholarly writing, few studies define them or address them. In some instances, those that do address these terms have conducted a narrow ethnographic study from which it is difficult to accept its representativeness and generalisations (See Poynting et al 2004; Dunn et al 2004; Wieviorka, 1995 and Jayasuriya 2002).

Nonetheless, it is important to note these terms and identify their relevance. The first of these terms “old racism” refers to and highlights the inferiority of ethnic groups; which it has been suggested ‘prevailed from the time of Federation in 1901 until the early 1970s and the end of the White Australia policy’ (Poynting et al, 2004). Old racism embodies a widely socio-biological understanding of race. It argues that racial groups should be separated from one another or that some racial groups are naturally superior to others; that Whites are the most superior in the Australian case. Pettigrew and Meerlens (1995: 101) refer to these as “blatant or old-fashioned racisms”. Jayasuriya (2002) contend that these old racisms include a belief in racial hierarchy and racial separatism. Then, these old racisms became dominantly stipulated by a “new racism” or “cultural racism” based on the accountability of cultural differences, for instance Islamophobia (Markus, 2001). In these “new racisms”, ethnic minorities are thus no longer viewed as inferior but rather they are differentiated as threats to social cohesion and national identity; that is to the ‘cultural values and integrity of the dominant (Anglo-Celtic) host society’ (Jayasuriya 2002; 241-42). This new racism operates more through ‘stereotypes of cultural traits of groups, or surrounding notions of self and other and national space’ (Hall 1992: 256-8; see also Gilroy 1987; Parekh 1987; Cole 1997). Important to note is that the latter are reproduced in the media and in political debates (Goodall et al 1994; Van Dijk 1991; Barker 1981). This latter point is a significant one yet receives little attention in the aforementioned scholarly works. The media has a significant role to play in asserting public attitudes and

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with female, 25 in Sydney CBD, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at 8am with notes taken during the interview.

therefore requires investigation. Moreover, is the suggestion that ‘overt racism has been replaced by new constructions of covert racism, manifest as cultural intolerance’ (Dunn et al, 2004: 412). In addition, with regard to new racisms Dunn et al (2005: 32) suggest that it is a form of racism where both individual and group rights are continued ‘on the basis that a cultural groups way of life is judged as nefarious, or on the basis that a cultural group does not fit or belong within the society defined as protagonist’. New racism embraces three main aspects; out-groups, cultural diversity and nation and issues of normalcy and privilege. Out-groups refer to those who are seen as Other. Asian-Australians, Muslims and Indigenous peoples have long been identified as key others to the national Australian imaginary (Hamilton 1990; Rajkovski 1987; Rizvi 1996; 176-7). It can be argued that contemporary racism in Australia is linked to historical notions of who does and does not belong. Anti-Muslim sentiment has been strongly recorded in attitude polling in Australia (McAllister and Moore 1989: 7-11). Furthermore, Dunn et al (2005) claim that 44.9% of those surveyed believed that some cultural groups did not fit into Australian society. The most commonly mentioned groups were Muslims (28%) and people from the Middle East (28%). It must be noted here, however, that the respondent rate to Forrest and Dunn’s study was weak and therefore questions can be posed as to its generalisability. A previous study conducted by Forrest and Dunn (2006) focusing on the locale of the Sydney region, noted that 45% of respondents identified a cultural group or groups that they felt did not fit into Australian society.

The second aspect noted of new racism is that of cultural diversity and nation. It has been suggested that the ‘ideology of nation is important to understanding racism’ (Hage 1998: 27-55; Goodall et al 1994: 161-188). This is particularly evident in the Australian context where those who do not “appear” to characterise what constitutes “Australian” are subject to racist behaviour. Within the wider Australian population, there is evidence of contradictory attitudes towards national identity, cultural diversity and multiculturalism. Forrest and Dunn’s study found that ‘whilst 85% of respondents were favourably disposed to cultural diversity, 45% were of a view that cultural diversity and multiculturalism were a threat to Australian nationhood’ (2007: 412). Although both studies were conducted in the post 9/11 world, there is little offered to identify the increase in numbers of those who view multiculturalism in a negative light. Therefore, two contradictory discourses appear to emerge in light of the topic of cultural diversity; that of Anglo-Centrism (pro-assimilation) and ethno-cultural diversity or (pro-multiculturalism). The issue of multiculturalism in the Australian context is a complex

one therefore, with little consensus in public opinion on cultural diversity and pluralism. Again, this was an issue raised in conversations with participants,

‘Australia likes to think of itself as a multicultural nation, but if it were it would welcome all cultures and faiths and not discriminate, as it does’.<sup>12</sup>

Issues of normalcy and privilege are the third component of this new racism discourse. Critical social theorists have referred to and suggested that there exists a normalcy of racism; that is ‘a context of white privilege associated with a way of life and thinking where racism is not consciously seen or is considered an exceptional aberration’ (Hage 1998: 53). Johnson (2002: 476) however refutes this previous argument suggesting instead that ‘except it is not a privilege [of being white] but of Anglo or Anglo-Celtic privilege in the Australian context’. Furthermore, alongside an apparent egalitarianism there is a strong strain of new racism aimed at defending the privileges of the dominant culture. Forrest and Dunn (2006: 710) note that in the Sydney region alone, 83% recognised that there exists racial prejudice in Australia. Recognition of Anglo privilege was less apparent, but still a majority of 57% agreed that it was evident. At the grassroots level therefore, it is apparent that a substantial majority of the Australian populous appreciate a need to speak about racism and anti-racism initiatives.

However, despite these supposed distinctions or differences between old and new racism discourses, Forrest and Dunn (2006: 711) put forward the argument that ‘the contemporary racialization of Islam in Australia actually has a great deal in common with old racism’. Forrest and Dunn (2006) further assert that this equivalence exceeds the degree of conceptual separation between old and new racism to the extent that the division may be misleading. Modood (2005) prefers to distinguish between what he terms colour racism and cultural racism, so as to provide a more tangible distinction between forms of racism. However, he merely states these two types of racism with little or no actual explanation or examples. Dunn et al (2004) go on to cite and highlight what they believe to be apparent similarities between old and new racisms. Firstly, like old racisms, new racisms operate to reinforce cultural privilege. These new racisms still fundamentally assist with structures of inferiority (hierarchies) and differentiation (exclusion). Poynting (2004: 14) supports this claim stating that racism initiates ‘landscapes of exclusion because they define not just what but who is

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<sup>12</sup> Interview conducted with male, 27, Bankstown, Sydney on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 at 11am with notes taken during interview.

acceptable. Racial vilification, by its very nature, emphasises a sense of cultural difference, but this sense of cultural difference is also a sense of not belonging'. Poynting (2004: 14) illustrates the former with a statement from a female Muslim respondent who states that 'incidents like 'in this country leave me feeling like I do not belong to this land I call my home'. This attitude of inferiority and exclusion is illustrated though the findings of Forrest and Dunn (2006) who found that more than one in eight Australians believe in some form of racial supremacy. Furthermore, some 13% believe that these races should be kept sexually separate in terms of the undesirability of interracial marriage (Forrest and Dunn, 2006: 714). Nonetheless the proportions involved are small and are mainly older people with lower educational attainment levels. There is a significant lack of ethnographic data and literature on young people and racism in the Australian context. Conversely the belief that there is "natural racial" categories, defined as "racialism" is widespread (Hannaford 19997: Miles 1989). A second overlap between old and new racisms noted by Forrest and Dunn (2006) is the reliance upon generalisations that are the basis of stereotyping for example religious difference (Blum 2002). Modood (2005: 13-14) suggests that to judge a culture as inferior or alien requires an "a priori" assertion that the racialized group has a cultural core that can be judged as lacking. To assert a shared cultural inferiority is little different from abating a shared biological inferiority (Modood, 2005). The third continuity noted by Dunn et al (2004) is that the contemporary racialization of Muslims in Australia draws heavily upon observable elements of culture. Racial attitudes remain phenotypical for a selection of victims. For instance, anti-Muslim sentiment is meted out against hijab-wearing Islamic women and it is these who have reported higher rates of racist incivilities and behaviour than those not wearing forms of cover (Dunn et al 2004). The final continuum suggested by Dunn et al (2004) is that this anti-Islamic sentiment and religious based racialization generally is by no means restricted to the current era. Together then, these four similarities make 'anti-Islamic attitudes and actions much like old racism or colour racism; they share functional equivalences' (Fredrickson, 2002: 7). Racism and racialization in the Australian context against Muslims is therefore not a new phenomenon but rather one that has emerged and evolved over time.

Indeed, as early as '1991, research showed that Muslims were among the four most vilified and racially attacked groups in Australia', the other three being Aboriginal people, Asians (meaning ethnically Chinese or South East Asian) and Jews (Poynting, 2004: 6). Moreover, and in support of Poynting (2004), Dunn et al (2007) assert that contemporary anti-Muslim sentiment in Australia is reproduced through a 'racialization that includes well-

rehearsed stereotypes of Islam, perceptions of threat and inferiority as well as fantasies that the Other do not belong or are absent'. This statement is substantiated through Dunn et al's 2007 empirical study of contemporary racism in Australia as it found that 41% of respondents perceived Islam as a minor threat to Australia whilst 15% perceived a major threat. For instance, the Islamic Council of New South Wales (2004) has outlined how the Australian Federal Government's 'legislative, security and military actions have reinforced this perception of an Islamic military/security threat'. However, despite these findings, it must be noted that there is a significant level of disagreement in both the political and academic arena as to the actual threat posed to Australia and its interests by radical Muslims. Nonetheless, these suggestions have emerged due to the surge of literature that emerged post 9/11, therefore whilst some earlier data exists, it is rare. Poynting's 2004 empirical study of Australian Muslims living in the post 9/11 world, found that there was a significant increase in racist behaviour and attacks since those events. For instance, 93% of those surveyed 'believed that there had been an increase in racism, abuse and violence against their ethnic or religious population; with 64% reporting "a lot more" racism directed at their population' (Poynting, 2004: 6). Moreover, Poynting (2004: 6) found that 80.2% of Muslims had reported experiences of racism, abuse or violence compared to 8.6% of Christians. Moreover, women too reported that they had experienced racism, abuse or violence since September 2001. Fieldwork serves to further support this argument with both Muslims and wider Australian society suggesting that Muslims are victimised more frequently,

'Muslims are a more vilified group, not only because we look different but because we are seen as not fitting in with Australian life and culture'.<sup>13</sup>

For instance, Poynting (2004) notes that over two thirds of Muslims experience racism in schools and colleges, compared to 19% of non-Muslims. Institutional racism, although a prominent issue, is vaguely addressed in Australian academic literature. Poynting (2004) however attempts to investigate this problem. In his ethnographic study, Poynting (2004: 12) recounts the occurrence of a young Muslim boy being 'held unlawfully by police during protests against the war in Iraq'. Furthermore, a European-background Muslim woman in her 40s 'complained of harassing and vexatious ethno-religious profiling by Australian customs and immigration officials, on a return trip from Indonesia' (Poynting, 2004: 12). Universities

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<sup>13</sup> Interview conducted with male, 19, Sydney CBE on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 4pm with notes taken during interview.

too, it appears, are centres of racism as over a quarter of Muslim respondents experienced some form of racism, abuse or violence at an educational institution in Australia. Moreover, 27% of respondents reported racist behaviour in their workplace. 36% of men were subject to racism compared to 24% of women. Interesting here is that it is men in this situation who are the victims of racism as it is predominately women who are subjected to racist behaviour. However, no explanation is given as to why this may be the case. Therefore, these constructions of otherness such as incivility, inferiority and incompatibility are key tools of contemporary racism in Australia. Muslim women in Australia experience racism more than men with the statistics reading 62% of women and 50% of men respectively (Poynting, 2004). Moreover, 67% of Muslims reported racism compared to 27% of non-Muslims. More than half of the respondents who nominated a believed cause of the racial attacks they experienced, nominated the wearing of the hijab (Poynting, 2004).

Although racist activity was evident prior to the events of 11 September 2001 against Muslims in Australia, this racist behaviour has become more frequent and violent since then. Numerous ethnographic studies previously mentioned have highlighted the prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment amongst the wider Australian population whilst one in depth study of the Sydney region noted high levels of anti-Muslim attitudes. Women were most vilified by racism and it has been suggested by both the author and the respondents of these studies that the wearing of the hijab played a significant role in this racist behaviour. Men too were subject to racism but on a lesser scale than women. Muslims in general, reported higher levels of racism than non-Muslims. Instances of institutional racism were also noted, the workplace and centres of education, places of leisure and security sectors such as the police were noted as having racist sentiments towards Muslims in Australia. There is a strong sense of the other with regard to Muslims and to whom suspicion is strongly connected. Muslims are seen as being incompatible with the Australian way of life that is, that their culture is too different from the Australian culture and that it can never “fit”. Muslims are seen as a threat to the Australian way of life and to what Australia is perceived to stand for. However, there is apparent contradiction on the wider Australian populations’ part as to what degree of assimilation and multiculturalism is preferred. It appears that the distinctions offered between old and new racism are perhaps misleading and unhelpful. Feelings of racial hierarchy and inferiority are prevalent in contemporary Australian society therefore these are not old racisms but extremely current. Despite this too however, these studies have also found that the majority of Australians recognise that racism is a problem and feels that there is need to address this issue.

## **Conclusion**

The issues raised and highlighted in this chapter contextualise the place of Muslims in Australia in the post 9/11 period. Although Muslims have been migrating and settling in Australia for two centuries, they remain one of the most vilified groups in Australian society. Islamophobia through cultural racism in the desire to dilute Muslim culture is evident through the marginalisation of Muslims as well as the racialisation of those of Muslim background. The tension between identity markers such as ethnic versus religious identity makes difficult everyday situations and for Muslims, it leads to a negotiation of their “Muslimness”. These issues and difficulties faced by the Muslim population in Australia may act as a catalyst in leading to the radicalisation of Muslim youth who feel threatened in what is their “home”. Moreover, such sentiments may have been triggered by anti-terrorism discourse by the Australian government as well as their policies and legislation which create the perception that it is Muslim youth who pose a particular threat.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Australian Counter-Terrorism Post 9/11: The Evolution**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter traces the evolution of Australian counter-terrorism policies post 9/11 and the implications of these for a sample of the Muslim population residing in Sydney. It outlines the virtually non-existent nature of Australian counter-terrorism policies prior to the events of 9/11. In order to appreciate the background and context of Australian counter-terrorism strategies, an examination of John Howard's political convictions shall be conducted to assess their influence on his government's policies. Subsequent to this, this chapter identifies, analyses and highlights the reactive disposition of Australian counter-terrorism policy papers and strategies under Howard, and how these strategies evolved in waves each following an international act of terrorism, i.e. 9/11, the Madrid and London bombings in 2004 and 2005, that subsequently led to the introduction of community based counter-terror measures. Moreover, this chapter will highlight the repercussions these counter-terrorism measures have had on a proportion of the Muslim population in Sydney, for instance on community relations and human rights violations. In addition, this chapter highlights the government's political motivation by identifying the change in scope of counter-terrorism strategies under a different government such as that of Rudd from 2008. Finally, through the evolutionary nature of this chapter, the decreasing importance of counter -terrorism as a political tool becomes evident, further placing increased potency on the question as to whether the extent of counter-terrorism implementation in the Australian context was and is warranted.

### **Australian Counter-Terrorism Pre-9/11**

Prior to the events of 9/11, Australia was not a direct target for terrorism. Before 2001, terrorism was dealt with under the common law as no specific laws against terrorism existed. Prior to 2001, the sole piece of legislation related, albeit remotely to terrorism and counter-terrorism was the Air Navigation Act passed by the federal parliament in 1991 which referred to the hijackings of aircraft. However, this piece of legislation did not make specific reference to terrorism rather it noted violence as the issue.

### **The Howard Government 1996 to 2007**

Around the world, acts of terror occurred that have had implications; economically, politically, socially and environmentally on a global scale. Moreover, these horrific acts have led to the destruction of infrastructure, the loss of lives and the intense instilling of fear, distrust and insecurity. This in turn, therefore, has resulted in the general drive for policies and legislation in order to combat future attacks. These policies were rushed through by governments fearing for the security of their nation as well as to protect their borders from those it deemed threatening. It is perhaps important to have a look at the Australian government's character in this period as it may uncover the reasoning behind some of these new counter-terror policies, for instance the government's social agenda.

In 1996, John Howard led the Liberal-national coalition to victory and went on to become the second longest serving PM of Australia, serving for eleven years. Prior to becoming P.M., Howard served as federal treasurer between the years 1977 to 1983 going on to become leader of the opposition from 1983 to 1996. Of particular interest was Howard's social agenda which he held strong views on, even before he went into office. As opposition leader, Howard was opposed to the idea of multicultural Australia as evident in his policy document *One Australia* (1988), which called for "one nation and one future" (cited in Gleeson, 2014). This document failed to recognise and address the diverse composition of Australian society. Furthermore, Howard's remarks that the rate of Asian immigration should be 'slowed down a little to maintain "social cohesion"', (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 55) further highlights Howard's dislike of the idea of a multicultural society or at least his dislike for the concept of multiculturalism. Moreover, Howard held reservations that a policy of multiculturalism could potentially undermine what he believed were common values and create divisions within

society (Gleeson, 2014). Indeed, in line with the One Australia policy rejection of Aboriginal land rights, Howard stated that the very idea of an Aboriginal land treaty was ‘repugnant of the ideals of One Australia’, further commenting that ‘I don’t think it is wrong, racist, immoral or anything, for a country to say we will decide what the cultural identity and the cultural destiny of this country will be, and nobody else’ (Hart, 2006 cited in Gleeson, 2014: 221).

Stating how he would govern if elected, Howard suggested that ‘it is not for government or indeed oppositions, to impose their stereotypes on the Australian identity’ (Howard, 1995 cited in Gleeson, 2014: 221). However, Howard used discussions over values and national identity in ways which sought to impose particular patterns of acceptable identity, beliefs and behaviour on citizens. Such a mentality resembles the Foucauldian idea of governmentality which attempts to shape self-regulating behaviour in order to manage a racially and culturally diverse population (Johnston, 2007). Howard’s views and standpoints on national identity long included an attempt to restore the prominent role of Anglo-Celtic heritage in Australian identity as already alluded to at the beginning of this thesis. Howard’s 2006 remarks highlight this as he states:

‘most nations experience some level of cultural diversity while also having a dominant cultural pattern running through them. In Australia’s case that dominant pattern comprises Judeo-Christian ethics, the progressive spirit of the Enlightenment and the institutions and values of British political culture. Its democratic and egalitarian temper also bears the imprint of distinct Irish and non-conformist traditions.’ (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 224).

Here, it is argued by those such as Johnston (2007) that Howard is putting forward an idea of civic nationalism; not the conservative idea, which advocates that those from diverse backgrounds should adhere to common civic values that are ostensibly above ethnic forms of nationalism. Rather, Johnston (2007) suggests that for Howard, desirable civic values are closely associated with the political values of a particular ethnic group. Howard, however, refuted this suggestion claiming that he does not support assimilation but rather something in between assimilation and separateness, which he refers to as “integration” (Gleeson, 2014). Rather, Howard clothed his assimilationist agenda as one of integration. Whilst people of different ethnic origins may not be expected to pass as being ‘ersatz Anglo-Celts, they are expected to be integrated into the values the Prime Minister has identified as British’ (Johnston,

2007: 198). This suggests, argues Johnston (2007) that nationalist forms of ethnic dominance have continued in Western countries such as Australia, for much longer than projected.

Moreover, Howard's vision of Australia's national identity led him to favour religious beliefs which correspond with the values he strives towards. The values Howard held had religious overtones and became more common in this post 9/11 period. Furthermore, Howard's views on the closeness of Australia, Britain and the US influenced Australia's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, since Australia highlighted 'a commitment...to acting where appropriate in different parts of the world to defend the values that Britain and Australia and the United States and other countries hold in common' (Howard, 2003). Such a remark serves to underline Howard's desire to maintain the values he held dear as well as those which correspond and serve as a commonality with countries he regards as allies such as Britain and the US.

Indeed, Howard's comment in which he saw Australia as 'an offshoot of Western civilisation' as well as his remark regarding perceived enemies 'who hate our freedoms and our way of life', risk evoking the racialized hierarchies inherent in ideas of Western superiority (cited in Johnson, 2007: 207). Within these comments are inferences and references, albeit implicitly, to those who are seen as threatening Australian culture and freedoms. For Howard, such threats are posed by those who he perceived as not sharing common values with the Western world. As well as this, and as will become evident throughout this thesis, followers of Islam were the implicit target of such remarks. The supposed post 9/11 threat of domestic terrorism, in particular, was the justification for Howard 'placing an even greater emphasis on migrant groups "integrating" into Australian values and national identity than in earlier policy documents', for instance the Liberal and National Party 1988 (Johnston, 2007). For instance, in the aftermath of the London bombings, Howard asserted that if:

'you come to this country you...have the responsibility to endorse and imbibe and embrace the values of our society. And that, of course, includes free speech, but it also includes a respect for religious difference and it includes a total repudiation and rejection of violence or the endorsement of violence as a solution to political disputes' (Howard, 2010: 56). Howard's views and comments have had particular implications for Australian Muslims. Whilst acknowledging that 'terrorism is repugnant to the values of Islam' and identifying a distinction between moderate and extreme Muslims, Howard nonetheless argued that there were issues with Muslim immigration that were different

from those of previous migrant groups since ‘there is a fragment which is utterly antagonistic to our kind of society, for instance, raving on about jihad’ (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 223). Moreover, Howard stated that Muslims may find it harder to integrate than other ethnic groups. Muslim critics too suggest that Howard’s own comments reflected religious intolerance and that Muslims became the new threatening migrant group, as Asians before them (Aly, 2007). The Cronulla Riots of 2005 whereby an altercation took place between Lebanese and Australian men on Cronulla Beach south of Sydney highlight the emphasis Howard placed on integration when responding to the question as to how the law should treat those of Middle-eastern background, ‘I don’t like hyphenated Australians, I just like Australians’ (cited in Johnson, 2007: 197). The issue Howard appeared to have with such terminology is that it permitted a hybrid identity<sup>14</sup> – those who offer hyphenated identities hold values which may conflict with Australian values. It is statements such as the above, which highlight Howard’s emphasis on homogeneity and assimilation over diversity that became most contentious. By stating his dislike of hyphenated Australians, Howard opined that hyphenated identities such as Greek-Australians and Muslim-Australians for instance, are not only undesirable but also unacceptable. Thereby, the dominant white British notion of being Australian is highlighted at the expense of other minority groups. For Howard, hyphenated Australians were to adhere to Australian values, assimilating to Australian identity suppressing other identity markers such as ethnicity. This sentiment was too articulated by respondents who felt conflicted being Australian of a migrant background,

‘I do not really feel comfortable saying publicly I am a Lebanese-Australian – I think Australian’s prefer “Australians”’.<sup>15</sup>

In forming one’s identity, Howard believed that “Australian-ness” should be the dominant identity marker for those who claim themselves as “Australian”.

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<sup>14</sup> As previously alluded to Chapter 2 and again reiterated in Chapters 5 and 7.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with female, 24, in Greenacre, Sydney on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 6pm with notes taken during interview.

This remark further serves to reiterate the influence and impact the negative discourse utilised by Howard on wider Australian public. See chapter 5 on discourse pp. 114-140 for in depth analysis of this discourse.

## **Beginning of Australia's Counter-Terror Chapter**

Within the wider, global post 9/11 context of fear, insecurity and suspicion, Australia's approach to counter-terrorism evolved in waves, each following an act of terror. The hardening of Howard's Australian counter-terror strategies and policies highlights the reactive disposition of his approach to counter-terrorism. The Howard government adopted measures which Aly (2013) suggests can be categorised into two camps; "soft counter-terrorism" and "hard counter-terrorism". "Soft measures", for the purposes of this research will be defined as those measures which are non-law-enforcement measures that address the underlying causes of extremism through a number of ways: promoting and challenging extremist ideologies with counter-narratives to reduce its appeal, diversion programmes, rehabilitation, various education initiatives and aftercare. These soft counter-terrorism measures implemented by the Howard government included legal reforms, anti-radicalisation initiatives, policy papers and advertising campaigns. The approach adopted by Howard following 9/11 was one characterised by the introduction of legislation and legislative amendments. According to Howard, the purpose was simply to prevent acts of terror like those that were occurring around the world, from happening on Australian soil. Indeed, although these acts were occurring elsewhere, Howard felt the need to implement measures to deal with terrorism within the domestic context. Howard's counter-terrorism portfolio did not become manifest because of the need to do so within Australia; rather measures were adopted in a reactionary fashion to global events.

## **9/11 and Wave One**

After the Hilton bombing of 1978, the Standing Advisory Committee on Commonwealth/State Cooperation for Protection against Violence (SAC-PAV) was established to respond to terrorism. 1980 saw the establishment of the National Anti-Terrorism Plan (NATP) following the advent of the SAC-PAV which would be the primary document on Australia's counter-terrorism policy and arrangements. Following 9/11, on 5 April 2002, Howard agreed with State and Territory leaders that a new national framework to combat the threat of terrorism in this new security environment was needed. The SAC-PAV was reconstituted as the National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC) in the same month as Bali bombings and on the anniversary of 9/11 and would be a 'high level national body comprising representatives from the Commonwealth, States and Territories,' (NCTC, 2002) with a broader mandate to cover prevention and consequence management issues and with ministerial oversight arrangements. Moreover, the NCTC would report to the PM annually, with a review of the national counter-terrorism arrangements every three years. The objectives of the NCTC

were to contribute to the security of the Australian community through measures which were threefold: firstly, through the provision of strategic policy, offer advice to heads of government and other relevant ministers. The NCTC sought to achieve this by reviewing and monitoring the threat posed to Australia, methodologies to deal with this threat, counter-terrorism legislation and through the provision of advice on the administration of a special fund. Secondly, the NCTC sought to contribute to the security of the Australian community by ensuring an effective nationwide counter-terrorism capability was maintained by developing strong relationships with all parties, a standardised response capacity at cross-jurisdictional level, effective intelligence sharing as well as effective command, control and coordination strategies (NCTC, 2002). Finally, the NCTC strove to add to the security environment of the Australian community through the annual reporting of Australia's counter-terrorism preparedness and capability to the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers. However, the differences between these two committees appear difficult to find except for the greater scope given to the NCTC than the SAC-PAV. The NCTC appears to have become the SAC-PAV with the same objectives and function simply with greater focus.

Despite recognising a new security environment and the need for reform in policy, the primary document on which Australia based its counter-terrorism plan remained that formulated in 1980. The Agreement on Australia's Counter-Terrorism Arrangements was the first policy document in response to the events of 9/11 and the Bali bombings. Nonetheless, some such as Wright-Neville (2006) regarded the establishment of this national body, that is the NCTC, as a positive step and well-needed reform. Wright-Neville (2006:2) suggests that the NCTC allowed for smoother intelligence and information relations between different levels 'of the national and state bureaucracies and by doing so it is helping to forge a culture of policy and coordination and consensus that has streamlined the nation's approach to counter-terrorism'. Moreover, Wright-Neville (2006: 2) opines that it was because of the 'new spirit of cooperation forged within the NCTC which contributed to the successful development of joint counter-terrorism task forces... [and] successfully detected and interrupted several potential terror strikes within major Australian cities.' However, there is little evidence provided for this, rather these joint task forces may have developed out of fear, a reactive disposition and an urgency to come together to combat this threat.

In further response to the events of 9/11, the Australian government through the Attorney General's department reiterated Australia's support towards international treaties. On

17 September 2001, for the first time in 50 years, Howard, in Washington DC stated that 9/11 constituted an attack on the US and so invoked the Australia New Zealand United States Defence Treaty which was an agreement signed in 1951 to protect the security of the Pacific region. In 1986 however, the US suspended its obligations under this treaty to New Zealand. Nonetheless, the invocation of this treaty is of great significance in the response of the Howard government to this new era of terrorism and was necessary to demonstrate, 'a determination on our part to identify with the Americans and to reaffirm the belief that the 9/11 attacks constituted acts of war, which under the ANZUS agreement were manifestations of a common threat' (Howard cited in Wright-Neville, 2006: 7). Further intergovernmental agreements were issued in the wake of 9/11 with the establishment of the National Counter-Terrorism Plan which sought to develop and maintain counter-terrorism capabilities.

It was early 2002, six months after 9/11, that the Howard government launched their main package of anti-terrorism legislation beginning with the Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2002 (no.2) which defined a terrorist act as an act or threat of action with intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause and made it an offence. This package also saw the introduction of the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism Bill 2002, Criminal Code Amendment (Suppression of Terrorist Bombings) Bill 2002, Border Security Legislation Amendment Bill 2002 and the Telecommunications Interception Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. March 2002 also saw the introduction of one of the most contested and controversial pieces of legislation introduced in the form of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002 which gave provisions for the detention and questioning of people for 48 hours in order to gather more information regarding suspected terrorist attacks. Due to the controversial nature of this bill, it was reviewed by the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills which noted concerns with human rights issues. As a result, this bill was withdrawn and reintroduced with amendments on March 20, 2003. Indeed, it was within this legislative package that controversy lay as it was the Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Legislation Amendment Bill which were to be the pivot around which Australia's counter-terrorism efforts were to revolve. Wright-Neville (2006: 4) further suggests that it was these two pieces of Australia's legislative package which led to 'widespread allegations that the government was using terrorism as an excuse to roll back core elements of Australia's democracy'. Whilst this thesis will provide an in-depth summary of the Australian legislative context in the post 9/11 era, it will focus on these two pieces of legislation, namely Security



Legislation Amendment Bill (2002) and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill (ASIO Bill) 2002, primarily as they are the crux of Australia's CT strategy and have been the most controversial. As well as this, these two pieces of legislation played a central role in framing Muslims as "suspect communities" as will become evident in subsequent chapters.

Although the government passed the Security Legislation Amendment Terrorism Bill (2002), which created a range of new offences that held out the possibility of life imprisonment for crimes relating to the planning or engaging terror attacks, it did not do so without the demand of changes and amendments from the Labour party and minor parties. The original format of this bill received serious criticism with concerns such as 'subjected Australians – including farmers, unionists, students, environmentalists and even Internet protesters who were engaged in minor unlawful civil protest – to life imprisonment' (Williams, 2014: 145), as it moved to criminalise any activities which were performed 'with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause and in that process, may have caused unspecified harm or damage'. Moreover, and controversially, the bill in its original form would have permitted the Attorney General to proscribe an individual or organisation as "terrorist". This bill was at the forefront of much debate and controversy therefore due to its definitional ambiguities.

The second bill, notably more controversial than the former was the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill (ASIO Bill) 2002, formulated to provide a legal framework for a substantial expansion in the powers of Australia's domestic intelligence agency (ASIO), 'to use its mandate to intrude more fully than ever before into the lives of ordinary Australians' (Wright-Neville, 2006: 4). In its original format, the ASIO Bill would have granted federal authorities the right to detain, interrogate and even strip-search both adults and children suspected of having either knowingly or unknowingly associated with individuals suspected of engaging in activities that may be connected to terrorism. Moreover, the Bill intended to remove the right to remain silent so as to avoid self-incrimination or protect sources of information. In these instances, five years imprisonment was the maximum penalty. Further contentious provisions contained within the ASIO Bill were the proposal to allow the possibility of indefinite detention without charge or trial by allowing ASIO to detain suspects for 48 hours but then to allow unlimited 48 hour extensions. In addition, ASIO had the right to deny suspects the right to a lawyer or to inform a family member or colleague they had been detained for the first 48 hours. Such onerous

provisions caused one scholar to suggest that ‘the ASIO bill would not have been out of place in former dictatorships such as General Pinochet’s Chile’ (Williams, 2003:6). Against this backdrop of scathing criticism, the ASIO bill failed to pass the Senate, with the bill being further scrutinised by the parliamentary committees. The Australian Secret Intelligence Service and Defence Signals Directorate that are responsible for the gathering of foreign intelligence, delivered perhaps the most damning verdict as it stated that as it stood in its original format, ‘the ASIO bill would undermine key legal rights and erode the civil liberties that make Australia a leading democracy’ (Hon. Jull, 2002 cited in Williams, 2014: 7). As a result of this failure to pass the Senate as well as concerns over human rights, Howard and then Attorney General Darryl Williams agreed to amend key provisions which allowed the ASIO bill to finally be passed some 15 months later. In its revised format, the ASIO Bill only permitted those over the age of 16, suspected of being involved in any way either knowingly or unknowingly in terrorist activity to be held for one week but only questioned for 24 hours in this period. Those detained were to be released from custody if not charged and were to be permitted a lawyer. Significantly, this revised form contained a ‘sunset clause whereby these new powers were to be voided in three years unless renewed by a fresh act of parliament’ (Wright-Neville, 2006:6).

It is worth noting here that in the final months of heated debate regarding the amendments to the ASIO bill, the Bali bombings occurred. These attacks had a profound effect on Australia and its people as in the words of Wright-Neville (2006: 55) for generations, ‘Bali has loomed in the Australian consciousness as emblematic of our emerging engagement with Asia’. The island had attracted millions of Australian tourists and given them the opportunity to ‘step into Asian culture’ a few hours plane journey from the ‘unmistakeably Western metropolises of Australia’s major cities’ (Wright-Neville, 2006, 55). The Bali bombings brought the terrorism phenomenon closer to home for Australia. Against this background, it is unsurprising therefore that the Australian government moved to introduce a second wave of counter-terror legislation. Further momentum was given to these legal reforms as revelation surfaced that the alleged spiritual leader of the group responsible Abu Bakar Ba’asyir had previously visited Australia where he had preached and met with Indonesian communities in Australian cities (Wright-Neville, 2006, 56). Consequential to this was the response of the Howard government. Howard yet again, moved in a reactive disposition and sought to introduce a fresh wave of legal reforms. In terms of legislation, Howard once more sought to amend provisions of the ASIO Bill so that in cases where an interpreter was needed, suspects

could be held for 48 hours rather than 24hours. Within such an amendment, there lies a clear racial element with those requiring language assistances suspected of requiring longer questioning. A further criminalisation was added in which detainees were prohibited from disclosing information regarding the circumstances of their detention as well as the nature of the questioning and could be incarcerated for a maximum of 5 years. The Australian government's response to terrorism culminated in military participation in the "war on terror".

### **Supporting Allies and Counter-Terrorism: Howard's Quest for Military Intervention**

For Howard, 9/11 marked the end of a period of Cold War innocence and the dawn of a new world: one that was 'new and very dangerous' (Howard, 2001). It has been argued by some such as Holland and MacDonald (2010) that the claim of a new era justified the Australian government's range of policies and practices in the context of the "war on terror", and was certainly employed in justifying military intervention. Moreover, Howard stated that 9/11 'constituted an attack on the shared values of Australians and Americans' and an 'attack on the way of life that we in Australia share in common with the Americans' (Howard cited in Holland and MacDonald, 2010:43). Such remarks serve to reiterate the previously made points that Howard, through his policies, was striving to maintain the Australian identity; that which is compatible with his allies. Howard further tied this to 9/11, argues Holland and MacDonald (2010), and suggested Australian vulnerability, 'arguing pointedly the following day that Australia is not immune from terrorist attacks'. This expression of concern was a central feature of the Australian government's approach to the "war on terror".

Howard and the Australian government's determination to assist did not falter when attention turned to the Taliban in Afghanistan. In order to redress the threat posed by Al Qaeda, military means were pivotal and justified. Further justifying the need for military intervention and support, Howard stated that it would be 'an expression of Australia's strong commitment and strong desire to share with the American people a common defence of things we treasure together' (cited in Holland and MacDonald, 2010: 7). Australia is compelled to participate in Afghanistan because Australians are 'a people prepared to fight our own fights' (Howard cited in Holland and MacDonald, 2010: 8). Furthermore, Holland and MacDonald (2010:6) put forward the argument that through participation in the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, Australia 'would be seen to have played it part in responding to 9/11 and defending the shared core values that were attacked that day'. Again, there is a strong need and desire on the part of Howard to maintain positive, powerful and close relations with the U.S. With this, the

Australian government prepared its military for action and in late November and early December 2001, deployed 122 troops to Afghanistan, sending 1,550 military personnel by the end of military operations (Holland and MacDonald, 2010: 6). These figures would not be final however, as Afghanistan would not be the sole receiver of military intervention from Australia; Iraq too would be the bearer of Australian troops.

John Howard's initial reasoning behind intervention in Iraq was Saddam Hussein's failure to meet disarmament obligations under the Security Council, evident in Foreign Minister Downer's claim on the eve of intervention, that 'the disarmament of Iraq constituted the unfinished business of the 1991 Gulf War' (O'Connor, 2004: 436). This follows Bush's declaration that the US would intervene in Iraq because of Hussein's failure to give up Weapons of Mass Destruction (WOMD). Increasingly, Howard would strive to justify intervention in Iraq and do as part of the broader "war on terror". Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Bali bombings came Howard's controversial attempt to link intervention in Iraq and the Bali bombings to the broader war on terror stating;

'we lost 88 Australian's in Bali because of a wilful act of international terrorism...and I will, amongst other things, be asking Australians to bear those circumstances in mind if we become involved in military conflict with Iraq' (Howard cited in Wright-Neville, 2006: 56).

In this dangerous new era, Howard and the Australian government suggested that military intervention was necessary to 'make it less likely that a devastating terrorist attack will be carried out against Australia' (Howard cited in Holland and MacDonald, 2010: 9). Whilst Howard again sought to approve military intervention as a counter-terrorism measure in order to prevent an attack on Australia, 2003 would see Howard and his government seek further counter-terrorism policies.

## Anti-Terror Campaigning: Counter-Productive?

On the eve of participating in the war against Iraq, Howard and the Australian government launched a \$15million three month “terrorism alert” advertising campaign across media outlets such as television, radio and newspaper entitled “Let’s Look Out for Australia”. “Be alert-not alarmed” was the phrase and theme behind the campaign urging people to contact a 24hour toll-free hotline to report any suspicious behaviour to authorities. The “protecting the Australian way of life from a possible terrorist threat” campaign features Australians including indigenous Australians, Muslim Australians and those of Caucasian appearance doing normal everyday activities such as sunbathing and having a barbeque. The campaign informs of Australia’s counter-terror capabilities and notes new measures such as the creation of specialist task forces. The pamphlet also states that individuals are to report anything they see that is unusual or suspicious. There is however no guidance as to what may be suspicious. Moreover, the campaign is vague on what to report on with no examples or references given. Controversy and great criticism surrounded this campaign with few publicly admitting their support. Philips of the *Sydney Morning Herald* was critical of the campaign stating that

‘while the advertisements attempt to portray a government concerned for the welfare of its citizens following the October 12 Bali bombing, the campaign has little to do with preventing terrorist attacks. The real purpose is to cultivate a climate of fear and apprehension and legitimise Howard’s unconditional support for the Bush administration’s ‘war against terror’; to divert attention from growing domestic social problems and to acclimatise the population to escalating attacks on democratic rights’ (Philips, 2011: 234).

The above statement by Phillips serves to reiterate sentiments felt by respondents of this research,

‘this measure was not justified nor did it do any good – it simply reiterated the suspect community narrative and polarised us as Muslims’.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with female, 34, Sydney CBD on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 5.30pm with notes made during interview.

This remark is common with Muslim respondents in terms of the suspect community narrative. For an in-depth investigation into the suspect community narrative and its impact, see chapter 6, pp. 142-165.

Such a campaign serves to create and maintain a climate of fear surrounding Muslims which culminates in the creation of a suspect community (Hillyard, 1993). In response to criticism towards the strategy, Howard declared that it was not possible to provide details on suspicious behaviour as it ‘depends entirely on the circumstances’ (Howard cited in Riley, 2013: 10). Philips (2011: 233), again critical, suggests in response to Howard’s statements that, ‘in other words, the government is creating the conditions for fear, confusion and narrow-minded prejudices to be given free reign’. The anti-Muslim discourse adopted and promoted by the Howard government as well as the Australian media played a role in influencing who or what may be perceived as suspicious. This discourse served as a catalyst for the creation and maintenance of the suspect community narrative. As Philips (2011) suggests, this campaign allowed for free reign on what constituted suspicious behaviour and as a result of 9/11 and the Bali bombings as well as the “war on terror”, the Muslim population were the most immediate victims: physical attacks, harassment, police raids, the vandalising of five mosques and the petrol bombing of the Melbourne Islamic centre. Although not implicitly targeted at the Muslim population, this campaign allowed prejudices to be played upon as one Muslim female participant interviewed states, ‘I know that the wider Australian public view me with suspicion because of my dress...this campaign justified their fear because I don’t fit into the Australian way of life because of my religion and the way I dress...I am viewed with suspicion...’. It is unknown whether this campaign resulted in unearthing any terror plots but rather, my research suggests that this campaign further alienated some sections of the Australian population, Muslims in particular. Further counter-terrorism measures would be introduced in 2004 with the potential to create further divisions within Australian society.

### **2004; The Threat to Australia**

2004 saw Howard and the Australian government take counter-terrorism measures to a new level with a fresh wave of policy documents and legal reforms. Australia’s counter-terrorism paper entitled “Transnational Terrorism White paper: Threat to Australia (2004)” was introduced, notably three months prior to federal election. The policy driver behind such a document was notably 9/11, the Bali bombings and Australia’s general fear that it, itself, was in danger of a terror attack. The foreword of this policy paper evidences this contending;

‘much is on the public record on the Australian Government’s response to the grave threat now posed to Australia by international terrorism...There has been less public

discussion about the nature of the contemporary terrorist threat posed to Australia and Australia's interests' (White Paper, 2004: iv).

Moreover, this policy paper goes on to identify and describe the threat posed to Australia and what it terms the 'new foe...perpetuated by a Muslim extremist cause' (White Paper, 2004: 8) in the fight against terrorism. This paper states that an act of terrorism is defined in Commonwealth legislation. It is the Criminal Code Act 1995 which states

'that a terrorist act means an action or threat of action where the action causes certain defined forms of harm or interference and the action is done or the threat is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause' (White Paper, 2004: 20).

This definition has been criticised as being over simplistic as Wright-Neville (2006: 12) contends, 'for Howard, like Bush, terrorism springs from the human capacity for jealousy and evil. It is a metaphysical phenomenon rather than a form of human agency rooted in real human experience'. This oversimplified analysis is also articulated clearly in the Australian government's White Paper (2004: 22), which explains terrorist behaviour in the following terms,

'[t]hey [the terrorists] feel threatened by our values and the place we take in the world. Our international alliances and our robust foreign policy are opportunistically invoked in the name of their "war". Our conspicuous example of economic and social prosperity is deemed a threat to their cause. We hear our values and social fabric attacked'.

Significantly, this threat appears to come from a particular source, as the White Paper (2004: xi) states, 'Australia and Australians are directly threatened by transnational extremist Muslim terrorism'. This document claims that the danger posed to Australia and its interests in the post 9/11 era only comes from that of Muslim extremism. Moreover, the 2004(8) White Paper suggests that this new foe is transnational terrorism and argues more pointedly that this transnational terrorism, 'is being perpetuated in the name of an extremist Muslim cause...it signals a new era of conflict'. Indeed, further bolstering the "Muslim as the threat" discourse are the measures that will help counter this threat. Firstly, a national response to counter this threat which would involve and require an Australian wide response at all government levels.

Secondly, a greater appreciation of law abiding Muslims which may be read as implicitly seeking to garner Muslim community support and engagement in the fight against terrorism. The second measure may serve to ruffle already evident tensions within the Muslim community concerning relations with authorities and intelligence gathering. As well as this, this White Paper suggests that because of globalisation, Australia's geographical placement no longer means it is insulated from acts of terror. Linked to the threat from transnational terrorism is the concern regarding chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear terrorism. The Transnational Terrorism White Paper also cites cyber terrorism and aviation security as potential threats to Australia and its interests. Whilst noting these potential threats to Australia and the urgent need to counter these threats, Howard was given impetus when, on March 11, 2004, the bombing of trains in Madrid occurred.

Somewhat predictably, this instigated yet another wave of reforms from Howard and the Australian government. In this instance, Howard found a more submissive audience as civil freedoms were being eroded in the quest for tighter national security and the need to fight terrorism. This wave of legislation and legal reforms aimed to introduce clauses through which the threats the government identified, if turned into actions, could be criminalised. The first of these reforms was to the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Bill 2004 which amended the somewhat 25-year-old Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979. These reforms added additional offences which could be subject to interception warrants as well as extending the protections of the Act in relation to text-based communications; it permitted calls to ASIO numbers be recorded and also clarified how delayed access message services could be dealt with under this Act. This Act was amended in order to address the threat identified by the Australian government in the 2004 White Paper (ix) which states that,

‘and they use modern tools. Many of their known leaders and adherents are highly educated, well-funded, and well versed in technology. They use all forms of information technology for operational planning and communications, to study targets, to transfer funds and to convey their message of threat’.

Such amendments served to further invade privacy and pave the way for subsequent legal reforms again implemented with haste, raising concern about the erosion of civil liberties.



## **7/7, Dialogue and further legal reforms**

2005 saw the counter-terrorism portfolio evolve to prevent intelligence based attacks on Australia. Motivations for these reforms were consequential of the 7/7 London bombings, which increased emotions within Australia because the close relationship between Australia and Britain as well as Australia's British heritage. The growing tension between the Muslim population and wider Australian society too was a contributing factor in the new approach adopted by Howard.

Amongst the most contentious of the counter-terrorism legislation introduced by Howard in 2005 was the Anti-Terrorism Bill (2005) about which Wright-Neville (2006: 9) states 'not since the Second World War had the Australian state had such powers at its disposal'. Indeed, criticism surrounded this legislation due to the perception that the clauses included infringed human rights, particularly sedition provisions sought to limit freedom of speech. Such provisions were seen as the government striving to stifle and prevent criticism by making government criticism illegal. Evolving under each new amendment and provision is the erosion of human rights as a means of protecting one's people. The provisions appear to become more invasive and restrictive as a means of national security. Under this law, an individual could be held for up to 48 hours if there was intelligence to suggest the person might be involved in a terrorist act or if that person possess any item (or 'thing') that could be connected with the preparation of a terrorist attack; 'in the latter sense this can include anything as innocuous as a train or bus timetable or a street directory' (Wright-Neville, 2006: 57). Moreover, this Anti-Terrorism Bill made provisions for the 'distribution of control orders over suspects for up to 12 months; the allowance of suspects to be held in preventative detention for up to 14 days; the banning of organisations which incite terrorism and the creation of offences which urge hostility toward various groups' (Melham cited in Wright-Neville, 2006: 57). The Act also permitted the placing of individuals under house arrest and allows the State to apply for 'orders to force a suspect individual to wear tracking devices, prohibit them from using a telephone or using the Internet, and even to stop them from working' (Pickering et al, 2008: 8). As previously mentioned, such provisions were the subject of much controversy over the erosion of human rights including rights to liberty, freedom of association, freedom of movement and freedom of expression. August 2006 saw the controversy reignite as the first Control Order was issued to Jack Thomas, a convert to Islam. Although admitting to training

in at the al-Faruq camp in Afghanistan after which he received money (approximately A\$5,000 or €3,000) from al-Qaeda sources, it was in fact Thomas's relationship with his Indonesian-born wife, Maryati Idris, a personal friend of the wife of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, that the Australian authorities were interested and concerned with. It is important to note here that as stated by the International Crisis Group (ICG), 'arranged in-group marriages have been a common tool used by Jemaah Islamiyah to consolidate its network through ties of family and kinship' (Gleeson, 2014: 28). Extradited back to Australia, Thomas or 'Jihad Jack' as the media referred to him, appeared in court numerous times only for the charges against him to be ruled invalid on the basis that the 'evidence presented by the Federal Police in the case to convict Thomas had been obtained illegally by dint of the Federal Police officers in Pakistan denying Thomas his request for a lawyer to be present at his interrogation' (Wright-Neville, 2006: 11). Thomas was slapped with a control order that confined him to his house during all but daylight hours and denied him a number of other basic civil liberties. One of the more bizarre restrictions included a prohibition on Thomas making contact with Osama bin Laden and a number of other designated terrorists (ICG, 2003: 28). This led to damning criticism of the Australian government from Muslim organisations or groups as well as a potent sense that they were the target of demonization. Evidencing this are remarks by Wright Neville (2006: 11) who contends that 'the move led many Muslim groups to view the Control Order as vindictive and designed to send a message to them that the government would and could subvert their own rights under law'. Adding to this sentiment were comments by the Prime Minister made during the heat of the public debate wherein he singled out Muslim Australians as a community that refused to integrate with mainstream Australian society as he tells them to 'learn English' (Wright-Neville, 2006: 1).

Whilst the Australian government was already under scathing criticism for its control order activity, further new offences under the controversial Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005 included the provision of assistance of any kind to the 'enemy' which can under the revised bill, carry a maximum penalty of seven years, previously three years, which Wright-Neville (2006: 8) argues contains 'such definitional ambiguity that a whole range of possible activities are now vulnerable to prosecution'. Further criticism of this provision came from one notable scholar George Williams (2014) who suggested that, 'it punishes people with up to seven years jail not for what they do, but for what they say, such as if they *urge* another person to forcibly overthrow the constitution or government'. Further consequence of 7/7 led to the expansion of the test for proscribing an unlawful association which conferred upon the Attorney-General

the authority to ban any organisation that demonstrated “seditious intention”. Wright-Neville (2006: 55) argues such a term ‘clouded in definitional uncertainty in that such an intention does not require the advocacy of force or violence but can be constituted by any action deemed by the state as “serious”’. The Law Council of Australia (2006: 8) in its review of this legislation, were concerned that,

‘the restrictions on communication under the new sedition laws are disconnected from the real issue of the threat of terrorist acts and are unwarranted and unnecessary. Measures which have the effect of curtailing free speech are highly unlikely to reduce the occurrence of a terrorist incident... Based on such human rights considerations, the Law Council considers that the new sedition laws inappropriately broaden previous laws on sedition to the extent of unnecessarily interfering with freedom of speech and expression. The Law Council believes that such changes imperil freedom of speech and expression and are unnecessary’ (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 87).

The issue of Australian counter-terrorism laws and human rights was one which rapidly became heated at both the public and political level. Of particular concern regarding the potential erosion of human rights were the ASIO Act 2003 and the Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005. Whilst Australia is a signatory of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Right (ICCPR), for instance, its anti-terrorism legislation particularly those above failed to conform with its ‘human rights obligations including those under Article 9 which prohibit arbitrary arrest or detention and those under Article 14 on due process of law’ (Rix, 2008: 53). Furthermore, the UN Special Rapporteur in his ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism’ expressed concern that ‘Australia does not have domestic human rights legislation guarding against undue limits being placed upon the rights and freedoms of individuals’ (Scheinin, 2006: 5). Moreover, although acknowledging that the ‘government of Australia points to a robust constitutional structure and framework of legislation capable of protecting human rights and prohibiting discrimination’, the lack of domestic human rights legislation ‘is an outstanding matter that has been previously raised by the Human Rights Committee in its observations on Australia’s reports under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights’ (Scheinin, 2006: 5). Further criticism of Australia’s inclusion of human rights legislation came from the Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights of the International Commission of Jurists who suggested that Australia had yet to enact

federal legislation incorporating international standards into national law, ‘a move which would help to establish a clear human rights framework based on international standards’ (Gleeson, 2014, 132). Human Rights bodies such as Secretary-General’s Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, the Commission of Human Rights, the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights ‘have long advocated a more holistic approach to human rights to ensure that measures to counter-terrorism are consistent with human rights values and the obligations they entail’ (Carne, 2004: 543). Concern regarding anti-terrorism legislation and human rights came from Amnesty International Australia, who stated that ‘these standards constitute the bare minimum necessary to protect the safety and integrity of individuals from abuse of power’ (Gleeson, 2014: 133). Concerns regarding human rights were to be further bolstered following further legal amendments providing greater surveillance.

Further amendments to the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 came in the form of the previously amended Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Bill 2006 now allowing for the establishment of a warrant regime for enforcement agencies to access stored communications held by a telecommunications carrier; the interception of communications of a person known to communicate with a person of interest and permit equipment-based interception. Further amendments were made in relation to maritime security, aviation security and money laundering. Of particular importance came the amended ASIO Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 in response to recommendations of the former Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD. Particularly controversial were those laws concerning ASIO due to fears of human rights infringements as a means of intelligence gathering. A further consequence of negative legislative amendments may be the poor relations between community and authorities thus resulting in difficulties in community engagement; a vital component of counter-terrorism in the Australian context as will be discussed in the “Countering Violent Extremism Grants” chapter. Nonetheless, 2007 would yet again rock and test community relations whilst maintaining the idea of a Muslim suspect community.

International terrorism again ensued with the car bomb attack on Glasgow Airport on July 1 of 2007. Implications for Australia in this instance were that one day later, on July 2 2007, Dr Mohammed Haneef was arrested in Brisbane and charged on July 14 with ‘recklessly providing assistance through a mobile phone SIM card to a relative later charged with the UK attacks’ (Holland and MacDonald, 2010: 7). Having been granted bail on July 16, Dr Haneef

had his 457-subclass sponsorship work visa revoked by the Immigration Minister and was detained pending his committal hearing. After reviewing the material however, the Director of Public Prosecutions withdrew the charges after which Dr Haneef 's passport was returned and he returned to India with his family on July 28. Further criticism, debate and controversy was to come when on December 21, Australia's second control under anti-terrorism legislation would be issued on David Hicks, an Australian citizen captured by Taliban forces in Afghanistan in 2001 and sent, without trial to Guantanamo Bay for 5 years due to a belief he was an 'unlawful combatant' and 'charged on 10 June 2004 with conspiracy to commit war crimes, attempted murder and aiding the enemy' (Holland and MacDonald, 2009: 57). Serious concerns regarding human rights in the Australian context in terms of innocent until proven guilty as well as an individual's right to not be judged with suspicion arose from this case. Such instances raise concern as to whether the Australian government was willing to sacrifice human rights in favour of "better" national security. Such a practice has led to implications not only for Muslims within Australia but also wider Australian society. It was such implications along with growing societal tension, which resulted in a raft of so called "soft" measures.

### **Soft Measures and Implications of Australia's Counter-Terrorism portfolio**

In the aftermath of the Bali bombings, at the practical level, raids were conducted on Australians of Indonesian heritage in cities across Australia. Wright-Neville (2006: 7) asserts that these raids were clumsy, and it was only in Melbourne where state police did not permit federal authorities to coordinate raids that, 'the operations were conducted with any degree of cultural and community sensitivity'. Citing the state of Victoria<sup>17</sup>, Wright-Neville (2006) claims that Victorian authorities recognised the potential for social anxieties and tensions to rise in the aftermath of the Bali Bombings and so 'developed a strategy to assuage the fears of the general public and to inhibit a potentially dangerous slide into public vigilantism against Australian Muslims'. Indeed, if left unchecked these tensions, already exacerbated by 9/11 could generate greater hostility towards Muslims, creating divisions with an unhealthy distance between religio-ethnic groups and mainstream society. Within the state of New South Wales, such tensions were exacerbated culminating in a watershed event, whose occurrence resulted in the establishment of dialogue and communication.

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<sup>17</sup> Home to Australia's second largest Muslim population.

An illustration of how this tension and hostility can manifest is evident through the Cronulla riots of 2005. These riots began with the alleged harassment by Lebanese Australian men of local girls and the subsequent assault of two volunteer lifesavers. Following this, a text message went viral calling that;

‘this Sunday every fucking Aussie in the shire, get down to North Cronulla to help support Leb and wog bashing day...let’s show them this is our beach and they’re never welcome back’ (Gleeson, 2014: 111).

More than 5,000 people then charged to North Cronulla where large groups of men of Arab appearance were assaulted, large amounts of Lebanese Australians mounted reprisal attacks; police and rioters clashed; dozens of people were seriously injured and 104 were charged (Daley, 2013). What is explicit regarding this incident are the racial tensions. However, it must be noted that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) found a radio programme had breached broadcasting code and whose material was likely to encourage violence or brutality and vilify people of Lebanese and Middle-Eastern background in the days before the riot (Forrest and Dunn, 2006). The text message stating that it was “our beach” highlights the symbolism the beach holds for Australians; a symbol those of Middle Eastern cannot identify with. Further highlighting these tensions were references to Anzac and Gallipoli who were Australian troops, as part of the Australian Imperial Force; such as ‘you’re standing on the soil that has been fought for by Australian Anzac diggers’ and ‘this is what our grandfathers fought for, to protect this, so we can enjoy it, and we don’t need these Lebanese or wogs to take it away from us’ (Gleeson, 2014: 51).

As a watershed event, there was recognition that collaboration and communication was needed with Muslim communities and wider Australian society to address the tension and discord evident within Australia. There was also recognition of the possible use of dialogue and interaction as a means of addressing these tensions.<sup>18</sup> Hence, the need for a forum through which the Muslim population and the wider Australian society could communicate and create an effective dialogue, was paramount in promoting acceptance and inclusiveness as it was predominantly between Muslim Australians and the wider Australian population that tensions were evident. Through consultation between Howard and members of the Muslim population,

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<sup>18</sup> See subsequent chapters for further analysis of this discourse, particularly chapter 5 pp114-141.

the Muslim Community Reference Group was established which consisted of Muslim religious leaders, community activists, scholars and community representatives. The terms of reference stated that the Muslim Community Reference Group will assist the Australian government to move forward by;

- i) acting as an external advisory group working within the Muslim population to promote inclusion and understanding and to challenge intolerance and ignorance.
- ii) facilitating working relationships between and amongst all stakeholders
- iii) providing advice on specific matters and
- iv) reporting to the Minister

The Muslim Community Reference Group was therefore implemented as a means to address the growing tension between Muslims and wider Australian society, as a result of global events as well as the Cronulla riots. These tensions led to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Special Meeting on Counter-terrorism requesting that the Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (MCIMA) develop a national action plan building on the principles agreed to at the formulation of the Muslim Community Reference Group. This resulted in The National Action Plan (NAP) to Build Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (2006) whose purpose was to ‘reinforce social cohesion, harmony and support the national security imperative in Australia by addressing extremism, the promotion of violence and intolerance...’. Such a document received input from various stakeholders including government as well as community leaders, both Muslim and non-Muslim. This would involve the rolling out of community based projects in order to address issues of social cohesion. In addition, ‘the NAP is part of the Australian government’s national strategic framework to address terrorism developed since the events of September 2001’ (NAP: 2006). Importantly, ‘the NAP seeks to address the underlying causes of terrorism, including the social and economic factors that encourage radicalisation and motivate extremist behaviour, as a contribution to a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism’ (NAP: 2006).

Further to this, the Muslim Community Reference Group commissioned a final report confirming their commitment to their recommendations through the National Action Plan to build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security. This stated, ‘we are pleased that the report’s proposals are well reflected in the projects that have been funded in 2005-06 and that will be funded through the \$35 million committed in July 2006, over four years, by the Australian

Government to the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (National Action Plan, 2006: 12)'. These were the basis and foundation of the Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives this thesis is concerned with. However, the growth in Australia's counter-terrorism portfolio as well as growing disgruntlement with the premiership of Howard and his counter-terrorism manifesto saw a new leadership emerge. This signified public and political disengagement and disillusionment as shall be elaborated on in subsequent chapters, which characterised a desire to perhaps foster a different mentality and approach to terrorism.

## **2008 and the quest to Reform**

2008 saw Labor come to government under the leadership of Kevin Rudd against a backdrop of criticism and controversy surrounding the Howard government. Unwavering support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq and failure to sign the Kyoto Global Warming Protocol shook Howard's popularity. Disillusionment with Howard and his government saw Rudd come to power with possible changes to the Australian counter-terrorism manifesto and portfolio.

Rudd announced that a comprehensive review, rather than reform, would be undertaken of homeland and border security in Australia as confidence needed to be restored in Australian counter-terrorism. Prior to this however, an investigation would be taken into the trial of Dr. Haneef (case mentioned above), a Brisbane resident who was arrested two days following the London Bombings of 2007. His arrest was based on two pieces of evidence; firstly, his personal sim card was found in the vehicle of the failed Glasgow bombing and secondly, he had booked a single ticket to India a day after the bombing. Rudd's investigation into the handling of this case found the media coverage of this case to be false and the deportation of Haneef a gross miscarriage of justice. For Rudd, a review reiterated the governments 'commitment to conduct an assessment of whether there is a need for change to Australia's current homeland and border security regime' (Rix, 2008: 34). Moreover, a review would investigate all departments having responsibility for homeland and border security and would consider the changes required 'to optimize the coordination and effectiveness of our [Australia's] homeland and border security efforts' (Rix: 2008: 34). The final report of this review was summarised and released in December 2008 along with the first National Security Statement (NSS). The Report of the Review of Homeland and Border Security also known as the Smith Report made recommendations aimed at improving Australia's counter-terrorism and building a safer Australia. As aptly stated in this report, homeland security is the terminology used to describe the actions that are taken by a broad range of actors such as governments, businesses,



community organisations and other relevant stakeholders to manage threats to public safety. This Report offers a comprehensive definition of national security, which is a different term from that of homeland security as the NSS (2008) states,

‘national security covers freedom from attack or the threat of attack; the maintenance of a state’s territorial integrity and political sovereignty; the preservation of a nation’s freedoms; and the maintenance of a state’s fundamental capacity to advance economic prosperity for its citizens’ (cited in Rix, 2008: 34).

Moreover, and significantly, this definition differs starkly from that used by Howard who used national security as a synonym for counter-terrorism (Bergin, 2009: 1). National security concerns cannot be encompassed under the umbrella term of counter-terrorism as natural disasters cannot be classed as acts of terrorism. This further highlights Howard’s desire to broaden the scope of counter-terrorism measures to justify his policies and practices. Indeed, for Howard, national security was identified with combating terrorism.

In terms of catastrophe and emergency management, the report suggests that ‘management across all hazards has received limited attention at senior levels within the Australian Government’ and recommended that ‘scope for greater national collaboration in emergency management’ (Bergin: 2009, 2). In addition, the report argued counter-terrorism was the recipient of too much research and focus and suggested that research should be conducted into security risks beyond counter-terrorism. With regard to this, the report further noted the role communities can have in national security as it is often the general community which is threatened (Bergin, 2009: 2). Moreover, Bergin (2009) points out that what is called for is buoyancy stating that, ‘indeed our homeland security policy should focus around the concept of *resilience* to provide a unifying mission for the many government bodies involved in protecting us from threats at home’ but contends that ‘here resilience shouldn’t just be understood as bouncing back; it’s also about being *stronger* than before the crisis occurred’ (Bergin, 2009: 3). In relation to this, the Smith Report suggested that that there was a strong urgency for the development of a counter-radicalisation strategy stating that, ‘a national counter-radicalisation strategy should now be developed that would enhance security whilst protecting civil liberties’ (Gleeson, 2014). This strategy should focus on pre-radicalisation—that is the earliest stages of radicalisation and,

*‘An Australian Muslim Communities National Security Forum should be established to develop strategies for tackling extremism that may lead to acts of terrorism. It could play a crucial role in detecting those prone to pre-radicalisation via its direct access to the grass roots dynamics of local communities’.*

This not only implies that the issue is within the Muslim population and that the community has responsibility to counter this perceived threat but it is also undertaking a neo-liberal approach delegating “power” to communities. The report made further recommendations aimed at improving Australia’s emergency management capabilities in terms of natural disasters, national and homeland security, and mass gatherings. It also suggested amendments to the protocol for information sharing and stressed the importance of education and personal development for those with responsibility for national and homeland security in order to ensure effective and productive management in the national interest.

Rudd proffered security documents as a means of highlighting the national security context, but as Rix (2008: 56) states, the above Smith review seems to suggest that it [Smith Review] will in some measure honour a commitment made in late 2007 by the then Shadow Minister for Homeland Security, Arch Bevis’. Bevis stated that the Rudd government would produce a White Paper shortly after coming into office which would assess the ‘terrorist threat faced by Australia and developed a blue print for a whole-of-government response to that threat’ (Rix, 2008: 5). In addition, 6 years after the events of 9/11, Bevis observed that Australia lacked ‘a clear, comprehensive statement of the threat presented by various terrorist organisations and their sponsors together with a clearly enunciated blue print in response’ (Bevis cited in Gleeson, 2014: 57). However, the 2008 announcement of the publication of a Review made no mention of a White Paper. In terms of counter-terror legislation, Bevis (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 59) argued that strong anti-terrorism laws ‘are needed but so also is getting the balance right’. These laws therefore should ‘enjoy broad community support, effectively target the terrorists and not undermine the very freedoms we all seek to defend’.

McClelland, the new Attorney-General recognised these concerns and was given the opportunity to adopt a broader perspective on national security and the terrorist threat. McClelland recognised that ‘a terrorist threat in Australia has as much prospect of emanating from a disgruntled and alienated Australian youth as it does from the awakening of a sleeper cell planted by an overseas terrorist organisation’ (cited in Gleeson: 2014: 121). This broad

sweep of potential “terrorists” saw Rudd assign \$70million on new visa measures which would require individuals from ten countries to provide facial scanning images and fingerprints on arrival to Australia. Concern was raised regarding such a measure with Bob Brown, the Greens Leader stating that ‘it seems a very blunt instrument to be picking out 10 countries amongst 200 countries and saying “if you come from one of those 10 you get the full check, if you don't, you don't...these things just don't stop at borders like that”’. (Rodgers, ABC, 2010). Such a policy was further illustrative of the anti-immigration discourse and policy within Australia. Despite, some dissent from political members such as that illustrated above, the legislative amendments, like those of Howard, continued.

From 2008 to 2010, nine pieces of legislation were introduced or amended under the Rudd government. 2010 also saw the introduction of the hotly anticipated ‘Counter-Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia (2010)’ promised shortly after Rudd came to office in 2008. Aly (2013: 54) asserts that the major impetus was a report conducted by Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) which suggested that the ‘risk to Australia’s National Security were home-grown proponents of an extremist and violent interpretation of Islam’. Furthermore, and importantly, it was the first document to state that law enforcement measures were not enough to curb extremism as well as focus on home-grown activities (Aly, 2013). This document emphasised the need for community engagement, cooperation and resilience in the fight against terrorism with a chapter dedicated to ‘Resilience: Building a strong and resilient Australian community to resist the development of any form of violent extremism and terrorism on the home front’ (White Paper, 2010). This White Paper moves the debate forward from Howard’s 2004 paper which focused more on keeping allegedly dangerous people out of Australia. However, the language used by Rudd is reminiscent of that of Howard. Howard cited the threat coming from “extremist Muslim” terrorism whilst Rudd refers to “jihadist” terrorism. It should be noted however, that Rudd does footnote the definitional complexities of such a term. Nonetheless, the phrase continues to carry negative connotations and stereotypes toward the Muslim community, further maintaining the notion of a suspect community. Despite the similarities in the use of the language regarding the threat, a change in strategy is apparent from the previous White Paper of 2004 and its focus on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery to that of analysis, protection, response and resilience. In line with this, within the intelligence branch of the Australian government, a counter-terrorism control centre would emerge. As well as this, as part of the resilience component to countering-terrorism, according to Rudd’s 2004 White Paper, there was a significant role for communities

in combating violent extremism. Indeed, an official CVE approach in Australia began with the Rudd Government in 2007. In 2008 the then Commonwealth Attorney General Robert McClelland stated, ‘I’ve tasked my Department to work with other relevant agencies, as well as the states and territories, to develop strategies for helping Australian communities to counter extremism . . . taking note of the UK example’ (Bergin, 2009). Running simultaneous to this community-based counter-terrorism manifesto, was a federal election. There was however growing discomfort with Rudd due to his desire to introduce controversial tax and pollution laws. It was against this backdrop therefore, that in 2010 with elections looming, Rudd resigned resulting in Julia Gillard of the same party, the Australian Labor Party becoming Prime Minister. Despite coming from an immigrant background, herself, Gillard adopted the approaches of her predecessors in terms of immigration and as such, agreed with the need for a community-based approach to counter-terrorism.

It was unsurprising therefore that 2011 saw the implementation of ‘the Countering Violent Extremism Strategy (CVE) (2011)’ which ‘aims to address factors that make people vulnerable to extremist influences and recruitment by terrorists’ (Aly, 2013: 45). This strategy will be the focus of a subsequent chapter which will include an in-depth analysis of its workings, and is also the core of this thesis.

Further annual documentation appeared in 2012 on the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the National Counter-Terrorism Plan. In contrast to the previous edition published in 2005, the 2012 edition includes a section devoted to “Countering Violent Extremism”. The importance of communities in the fight against terrorism and the benefits to all agencies of having community support in terms of good rapport, intelligence, engagement and trust is alluded to. Following on from this apparent shift towards a more community based counter-terror strategy, 2013 saw yet another change where terrorism and counter-terrorism took a less prominent seat as relations with Asia became the dominant theme as in the policy paper ‘Strong and Secure: A Strategy for Australia’s National Security (2013)’. As Aly (2013: 45) contends ‘the Government’s work that is essentially CVE is now considered a small part of one of the eight pillars of the new national strategy’: ‘Strengthening the resilience of Australia’s people, assets, infrastructure and institutions’ (White Paper, 2013 cited in Aly, 2013: 45). Moreover, soft counter-terror measures were downgraded that they were not included as a method in features of the Australian approach. A sea change in approach was now evident therefore with more of a focus on resilience, following a decade of hastily drafted

and implemented legislation, as well as a potent counter-terror and anti-Muslim discourse. Despite this sea change however, the environment and mentality fostered by Howard epitomised by anti-Muslim and anti-immigration discourse would be difficult to counter.

## **Conclusion**

9/11 saw the advent of a sea change in Australia's counter-terrorism portfolio. Prior to 9/11, terrorism in Australia was relatively unheard of and consequentially there was little in the way of legislation or sanctions for dealing with it. This would change however with Howard as leader of the government. Early on in his political career, Howard had strong views on social cohesion and the composition of Australian society. These are evident from his comments on Asian migration and his slogan for the One Australia party, "one nation and one future". These anti-multicultural views struck a chord with the Australian people for in 1996, Howard became Prime Minister. Central to the discourse, narrative and rhetoric of Howard are references to national identity and the composition of the Australian nation. Within this discourse, are continuous references to markers of national identity which Howard view as appealing as constituting the "Australian". Whiteness, Anglo-Celtic heritage, cultural norms and practices that are based on Christian tradition; these are the characteristics of people Howard sought to include in his Australia. Those who did not obtain such characteristics were sought not to integrate but rather to assimilate into Australian society; they were to take on the values and practices of the "ideal Australian".

This assimilationist discourse was fostered and promoted by Howard as well as by the media and took an anti-Muslim stance. Muslims were seen as those who primarily posed a threat to the makeup of Australian society; in terms of their religious beliefs, their cultural practices as well as their ethnic background. Indeed, it was these characteristics Howard manipulated to cite Muslims and Islam as a threat to Australia and subsequently justify his reactionary disposition to countering the terrorism threat to Australia.

The Australian government's reactionary disposition saw a raft of counter-terror laws, papers and policies drafted and implemented. A new batch of legislation was drafted and implanted following an act of terror, none of which occurred on Australian soil, but some of which however had Australian fatalities. Each of these new waves of legislation brought more stringent and contentious provisions. Simultaneous to this was the deployment of Australian

troops to Iraq as part of the “coalition of the willing”. Alongside this was growing concern regarding the erosion of civil liberties and human rights in order to maintain “national security”. Indeed, Australia’s involvement in military action post 9/11 contributed to the already tense relations between communities within Australia. Increasingly invasive laws as well as the infringement of basic human rights such as right to freedom were at the forefront of this concern. The proportionality of Howard’s counter-terror measures to the level of threat actually posed was under increasing scrutiny also. Acting as justification for this was Howard’s and the media’s anti-Muslim scare-mongering narrative. For Howard and the media, Islam was synonymous with terrorism. As well as this, Muslims and Islam were depicted as posing a significant threat to Australian society, not only in terms of violent extremism but also in terms of the Australian national identity and “way of life”.

Howard’s role as ambassador for an assimilationist agenda and Australia was to come to an end when in the federal election of 2007, Labour were victorious. This came against a background of discontent with Howard and his staunch support of the U.S. led invasion of Iraq, his manipulative discourse and the erosion of human rights for the sake of national security. The uneasy environment in which Kevin Rudd came to power resulted in a review of counter-terror practices as well as an investigation into what emerged as a serious miscarriage of justice involving Dr. Haneef. Rudd believed such a review would restore public confidence in Australian counter-terrorism. This Smith Report made a number of recommendations aimed at improving Australian counter-terrorism measures. One such recommendation was including communities in the fight against violent extremism; an approach which remained under newly appointed Julia Gillard. Alongside this were a number of policy documents and White Papers drafted. A change in strategy was also evident from that of Howard, from a preventive focus to a focus on resilience. These policy papers too noted the role of the community as a means through which to improve counter-terrorism efforts. Indeed, with this was the shift of focus from the threat from outside Australia to the threat of home-grown terrorism inside Australia. The community based countering violent extremism initiative was therefore born. This will be the subject of the subsequent chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Countering Violent Extremism**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will follow on from the previous introducing and illustrating the so called “soft measures” implemented, as responses to global terrorism through increased community engagement in the form of community grants, namely Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives (CVEs). This chapter will introduce these CVE’s as well as describe and analyse the backdrop in which these were implemented. Their reception and impact within a sample of the Muslim population in Sydney will be illustrated. As already stated and analysed in the previous chapter, the Australian government beginning with Howard within the wider global context, began a campaign of counter-terrorism to inhibit the perceived threat posed by violent extremism. 9/11 was the turning point in the nature and scope of counter-terrorism, not only within Australia, but also on a global scale with an increased focus on the role of local communities in combating terrorism.

#### **Origins**

From 2002 when these community based initiatives began, concerned with building community relations to 2013 with a focus on countering violent extremism; there have been some 355 programs funded; firstly by the Department Foreign Affairs and Trading and subsequently by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship with the grant schemes being managed under different programs, for instance the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security and subsequently the Diversity and Social Cohesion Programme. Currently housed under the Attorney General’s Department are the Building Community Resilience Grants under which the Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives are based. Programmes aimed at building community harmony and cohesion, alongside tackling violent extremism are offered by the Police, at both State and Federal level and consist of sports programmes and information sessions. These, however, are contentious because of the suspicion surrounding police involvement and engagement with Muslim communities. Concerns have been raised within Muslim communities as to the exact nature of this engagement, that is, whether seeking to genuinely build relationships, or mere intelligence gathering. This is related to the widespread consensus within both academia and policy circles

within Australia, as well as globally, that communities have a central role in combating violent extremism (Gleeson, 2014).

In particular, as a result of the July 7 bombings in London, there grew a greater fear surrounding “home-grown terrorism”, and the importance of community involvement in addressing this threat became increasingly popular. Australia too, was fearful of this phenomenon as a result of 7/7 but also because of foiled terror attempts on home soil (Sydney and Melbourne in 2005). Furthermore, an ASIO National Security Assessment found that the greatest threat posed to Australia came from home grown proponents of violent interpretations of Islam which resulted in a counter-terrorism White Paper in 2010. This paper proposed to re-dress this perceived threat with the aim of Countering Violent Extremism through Resilience: Building a strong and resilient community to resist the development of any form of violent extremism and terrorism on the home front’ (White Paper, 2010: 7).

Consequential of the above paper then, 2011 saw the development and launch of the Countering Violent Extremism Strategy housed within the Attorney General’s Department in Canberra under the scope of Building Community Resilience. The aim of this strategy was to primarily address the root causes of violent extremism by devolving power to local communities through funding schemes whose project aimed to tackle these root causes of violent extremism. The focus of these programmes was therefore pre-radicalisation; that is preventing radicalisation at the outset. First piloted in New South Wales where the largest Muslim population reside, the strategy was then rolled out on a national scale. This strategy was to further contribute to Australia’s national security and support its broader counter-terror measures (White Paper, 2010). Moreover, this countering violent extremism strategy was to add further dimension to Australia’s counter-terror measures through its “soft” counter-terror approach; that is by adopting non-law enforcement measures with the aim of addressing root causes of violent extremism. As stated within the White paper (2010:67) ‘a critical partner in protecting Australia from terrorism, and a valuable source of information regarding terrorist-related activity are local communities. These community engagement programs and those of other Commonwealth agencies, all aim to build social cohesion, harmony and security’. The Countering Violent Extremism Strategy advocated by the Australian government sought to utilise this community capability.



## Conceptual Complexities

Before launching into an in-depth exploration of this countering violent extremism strategy, it may be useful to make reference to the conceptual difficulties of the terminology associated with this strategy. As is agreed, there is little consensus to the meaning and precise definition of terms in this field.<sup>19</sup> Terms such as “violent extremism”, “radicalisation” and “counter-terrorism” are utilised by governments, the media and community organisations without reference to their ambiguity as has been alluded at the beginning of this thesis. In this instance, “resilience” is one concept which is used continuously throughout political campaigns. Searching for a definition of resilience within a countering violent extremism framework within the Australian context finds the following conceptualisation on the Living Safe Together webpage, <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/pages/home.aspx>

‘in the context of violent extremism, resilience is about harnessing the strengths of Australia’s inclusive and open society in the face of divisive violent extremist narratives. Resilience is about the ability of the population to challenge violent extremism and to recover from a potential terrorist attack’.

In addition to this conceptualisation, the Living Safe Together webpage goes further so as to define a resilient Australia as,

‘an informed and prepared population that is resilient to the processes of radicalisation that lead to violent extremism’.

The text defining a resilient Australia further states how violent extremism can adversely impact on Australian society,

‘violent extremism undermines the security and social cohesion of the Australian community, and extremists often exploit adverse political, social and economic conditions to indoctrinate, recruit and motivate others’.

Central to these definitions therefore appear to be notions of transparency of information, the sharing of intelligence and willing communication. This is however, against a backdrop of anti-Muslim discourse, negative stereotyping and community engagement that is viewed as

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<sup>19</sup> Reference to conceptual difficulties is also alluded to in the Introduction.

suspicious and disingenuous. Such practices and sentiments would challenge the idea of an inclusive and open society which is apparently, according to the above definition central to securing a resilient society. Such sentiments were evident with respondents to this research;

‘there is apparently, in theory at least a working relationship between us the Muslims and the government that is based on trust and honesty, but it is not...they are just out to get information out of us about us’.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, there appears to be a level of difference between the theoretical framework and the reality for such measures. Nonetheless, the role of the community remains central to this counter-terror policy.

Although previously mentioned, the role the 7/7 bombings played in bringing a community based approach to counter-terrorism is of crucial importance as it highlighted the potential for home grown terrorism. The London bombings as noted by Briggs (2006: 971) ‘brought a community based approach back to centre stage’. With regard to the UK, Briggs (2006:971) asserts that

‘the government acknowledged the need to work in partnership with the Muslim communities to prevent young people from being radicalised in the first place, and to ensure that communities were resilient enough to respond to, and challenge, extremists from within’.

Although made in reference to the U.K., this statement is relevant to the Australian context also. Australia’s counter-terror measures resemble those of the U.K., with Howard stating that Australia took its counter-terrorism influence from the U.K., whether or not the measures were proportionate to the threat posed (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 221); therefore, it is somewhat unsurprising that when the U.K. adopted a “soft” community based approach through their Channel and Prevent programmes, Australia presents a community focused Countering Violent Extremism Strategy. Here we see the influence of Howard through measures which resemble the efforts of other States in combating terrorism. The long-term goal of this, according to the Countering Violent Strategy (2011: 5) was to ‘reduce the risk of home-grown terrorism by

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<sup>20</sup> Female, 24, Politics Student; semi structured interview conducted November 18, 2003, 11am; Bankstown, Sydney; notes were made during interview.

strengthening Australia's resilience to radicalisation and assisting individuals to disengage from violent extremist influences and beliefs'. Perliger et al. (2009: 1282) note that:

'The fact that many of the terrorist networks active today in Western countries have developed within closed and traditional, urban, usually immigrant communities lead us to conclude that only an organization adapted and skilful in such long-term activity within civilian populations – and able to form trusting relationships and provide assistance to its public – can in the end create an effective intelligence infrastructure in the community and recruit informants from within it'.

This final remark is rather intriguing as it serves to bolster and substantiate sentiments felt by Muslim communities that the ultimate aim of these initiatives is the recruitment of informants and the gathering of intelligence. Such a finding is substantiated by findings conducted post London bombings which found that 'elements from within the closed communities from which the terrorists grew knew about the radical groups and would have been ready to cooperate with law enforcement agencies to prevent their growth' (Perliger et al, 2009: 2382). In order to foster and facilitate a resilient population, community support is central to such a measure. This community support would be bolstered through genuine engagement with local communities.

### **Community Engagement**

The community is central to the success of this strategy. In response to concerns about home-grown terrorism that emerged particularly after the London bombings, police forces across Australia developed community focused initiatives as part of their counter-terror efforts. In New South Wales, this was the community engagement programme of the Counter-terrorism and Special Tactics Command. While community policing more broadly may have waned, community policing for anti-terrorism has waxed. What this engagement would consist of would depend on the individual. Indeed, as with most concepts and terms in this field of study, there is contention surrounding the different understandings and modes of engagement.

Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988) for instance suggest that community engagement is a process which involves individuals, organisations and communities achieve power, not for domination, but to implement change. Myhill (2006) puts forward the assertion that there exist three basic levels of engagement; at the democratic mandate level through which the involvement of community members is pursued; at neighbourhood level where there is a focus

on local issues and priorities and finally at the intermediate strategic level, which involves wider police service, regional and national issues and priorities. Cook (2006) goes even further as he suggests that in fact community participation may consist of five levels; information which tells people what is planned; consultation whereby options are offered with feedback given but no allowance for new ideas; deciding together which provides opportunities for joint decision making; acting together where different interests come together to decide what is best and supporting independent community interests where local initiatives are offered funds or other support to develop their own agendas with guidelines. Such levels were recognised by some participants but it was felt that there was little or indeed no consultation, that it was in fact more like a dictatorship;

‘yes, in theory, we are to be consulted...we are consulted but it is when decisions are made.... we are not included in the planning’.<sup>21</sup>

The above serves to highlight a particular level offered by Cook (2002) whereby decisions are made without consultation with individuals, rather such practitioners are simply told what to do – such a comment seems to refute the theoretical workings of CVE.

In theory, the levels above offered by Myhill (2006) and Cook (2002) offer step-by-step instructions on how community engagement unfolds. Furthermore, it is worth noting that distinctions between styles of engagement have been identified; that of proactive and reactive engagement. Proactive engagement is

‘where communities become actively involved in the development of particular initiatives with police, having a decision-making role whereby communities are consulted and actively engaged at all stages of a project, from initial conceptualisation through to development and implementation’ (Spalek et al, 2009: 27).

Reactive engagement on the other hand is where

‘communities respond to initiatives that have already been developed and events that have already taken place, so that feedback is sought by police from communities rather

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<sup>21</sup> Male; Community leader, CVE practitioner; unstructured interview conducted 20 November 2013 at 2pm in Sydney; notes were made during interview.

than active involvement in decision-making – providing information to communities and consulting them for their feedback rather than police and communities deciding and acting together’ (Spalek et al, 2009: 27).

Within an Australian context, the reactive engagement stream seems most fitting, as these initiatives were developed through a top-down approach by the government for the community, without the community’s active engagement as illustrated below by participants;

‘they [the government] developed these programmes, decided what they wanted and then told us what to do...that is how this works’.<sup>22</sup> (male, CVE practitioner)

Comments above are interesting, despite the establishment of a number of Muslim Reference groups discussed in the previous chapter, whose purpose was consultation and input regarding issues which involve their community. This reiterates sentiments felt by participants of this research that such measures were merely for the government and authorities to appear engaged with the community when in reality, there is little agreement and consultation. There has been a further criticism of community engagement and of these CVE initiatives from the Muslim population who assert that they are only engaged in a reactionary fashion. This is reminiscent of Howard’s governing style in terms of implementing counter-terror laws following a global act of terrorism. Indeed, in addition to this, are issues relating to governance in terms of community based counter-terror approaches.

According to Brennan et al. (2009) governance is to be understood as including both government and civil society, in decision making. This occurs through the interaction of ‘top-down, state-led imperatives and bottom-up approaches that includes networks, groups, communities and others that are part of what might be deemed as civil society’ (Spalek, 2010: 745). This would appear to fit into the proactive engagement stream whilst the governance practice of the Australian government does not. Spalek (2010) further argues that governance can be regarded as comprising of two inter-related but sometimes conflicting dynamics. Firstly, Spalek (2010: 745) suggests there are

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<sup>22</sup> Male, CVE practitioner; semi-structured interview conducted 17 October 2013 in Sydney; notes made during interview.

“top-down” approaches involving global and nation state approaches to counter-terrorism, whilst on the other hand are “bottom-up” approaches which involve state and non-state actors implementing mostly localised approaches’.

“Top-down” approaches encompass ‘geo-political power plays between countries which can significantly influence the security policies of nation-states’ and as such the “War on Terror” could be identified as so (Spalek, 2010: 146). As addressed in the previous chapter, Bush and his “coalition of the willing” mandate illustrate this idea of geo-political power and influence. Moreover, the “War on Terror” could be regarded as a politicised global strategy, ‘helping to re-configure security issues at the level of the nation-state and the locale’ (Spalek, 2013: 145). Top down approaches therefore appear to be more concerned with national and state security than individual security, as Spalek (2013: 145) reiterates ‘top-down governance approaches therefore include international and nation-state led approaches that prioritise the maintenance of a global world order and nation state security over individual and community security concerns’. This too could be used to illustrate the motivation behind the invasion of Iraq and the War on Terror.

Bottom-up approaches, on the “other hand, to counter-terrorism are those which involve community engagement through partnerships and engagement between authorities and communities and are influenced by concerns and issues of those communities. In theory, this refers to the establishment of the Muslim Reference Groups discussed in the previous chapter, whose purpose is to consult and collaborate with government and authorities regarding their concerns. In terms of governance of bottom-up approaches, responsibility and accountability for preventing terror is increasingly devolved to local communities whilst centralised control is still maintained with regard to resources and target setting (Spalek, 2013). Moreover, in relation to both top-down and bottom up approaches, the “community” is seen as having a different role in each approach. In top-down approaches, the concept of community is predominantly regarded as the problem whilst under bottom-up approaches; the notion of community is largely regarded as the solution. Both these theoretical frameworks are evident within the Australian context. Firstly, the community, within and amongst one another are regarded as the solution to fighting home grown terrorism through information sharing with each other and authorities. However, on the other hand, these schemes also regard communities as the target because they are seen as potential problems. Muslim communities within Australia are regarded both as the solution because they are those who are engaged with and

are undertaking such programmes, whilst simultaneously viewed as the problem as terrorism has been portrayed as a Muslim phenomenon within media circles as well as through government rhetoric and discourse; differences and otherness are framed as threatening and dangerous. Furthermore, Lowndes and Thorp (2010: 123) stress that ‘tensions between a locally driven, community focused approach and a nationally led security-oriented agenda have been ongoing’. Spalek (2013) puts forward some suggestions as to why these tensions may arise. In particular, Spalek (2013) contends such tensions are due to the emphasis placed on community cohesion. Ideas of community cohesion can create difficulties for Muslim identities as a whole, as ‘Islamic ideology here is portrayed as dangerous and in conflict with “western values”’ (Jackson, 2005: 51) and so Muslims are viewed as not ‘integrating with wider society’ (Spalek, 2013: 147). These claims are illustrated and evidenced in subsequent chapters looking at Australian political discourse as well as the findings from my fieldwork. The belief that communities can defeat terrorism and contribute to an effective counter-terror strategy is held by advocates of both approaches. These beliefs saw the development within the police force of New South Wales of a specialist branch to engage with local communities.

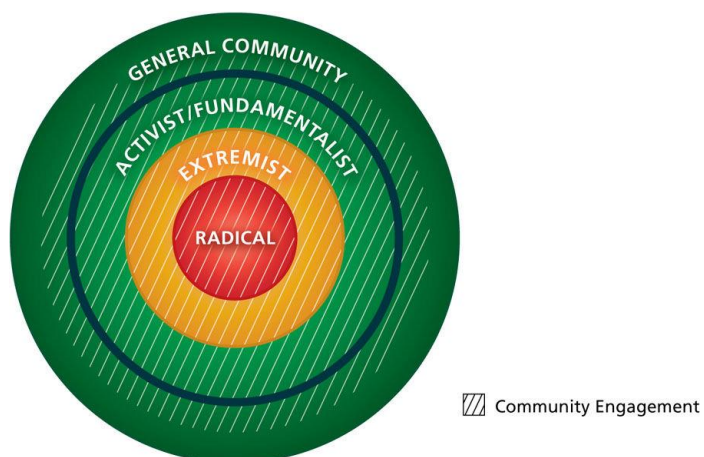
### **The Australian Approach: Community Engagement with Muslim communities - A multi-layered approach**

The Counter-Terrorism and Special Tactics Command of the New South Wales Police Force developed a Community Engagement Model aimed at building trust and encouraging the Muslim population to identify and discourage those at risk of radicalisation. The model utilised by the New South Wales Police Force and the Counter-terrorism and Special Tactics Command is that of a circular model. This circular model is sought to represent the continuous nature of community engagement and involvement and also, that those deemed radical are surrounded by the wider community, further emphasising the wider communities’ role in countering violent extremism. One could argue, however, that those who have become radicalised are not surrounded by the community but have rather formed their own circle or communities outside of it. Those involved in community engagement state that ‘the circular model is representative of the strength of belief systems within the community, in the terrorism context’ (Gleeson, 2014: 231). The aim of this model is to graphically demonstrate that the people being targeted are those who show signs of criminal behaviour or of supporting such criminal behaviour (Gleeson, 2014). Furthermore, is the assertion that no particular segment of the population is the focus or the target because of their religious affiliation. Whilst such a statement is made,

the underlying agenda is fairly obvious as illustrated by the Muslim audience these authorities seek engagement with as part of the counter-terrorism strategy.

Those at the centre of the circle represent a mind-set that would be willing and prepared to breach terror legislation. On the other hand, those on the periphery of the circle would tend towards a non- ideological or non-religious belief system within the terrorism context, or indeed non-terrorist approaches within the belief system. The sector entitled “activist/fundamentalist” can be representative of a strong belief system but with no propensity towards breaching the legislation (Gleeson, 2014). The focus and operational aim of the Counter-terrorism and Special Tactics Command are those in the centre of this circle; that is those who are believed to hold extremist views and those who follow radical ideology. Direct engagement with these segments of the community is primarily conducted through the Community contact and Business contact units. This is despite a whole of government approach argues Gleeson (2014). As such, strategic partnerships are maintained with other agencies, prime examples being the Department of Premier & Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission (Forrest and Dunn, 2007). The focus and intent of counter-radicalisation initiatives begins on the fringe of the extremist fraction, flowing into the radical fraction of the model. Indeed, as this model, as officially used, confirms previous arguments within this thesis regarding the creation of suspect community. Indeed, by placing radicals at the core of the community both exerts pressure on communities’ and creates “suspect communities” as the extremists are within the communities.

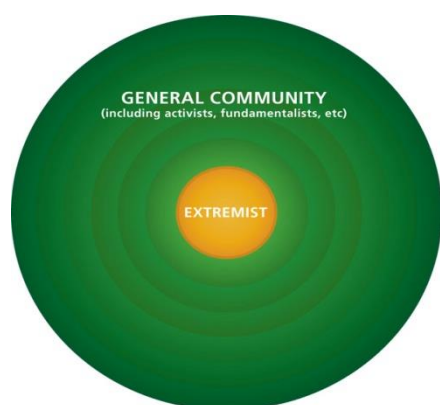
*Source:* Counter-terrorism and Special Tactics Command (2011)



The above diagram of the community engagement model highlights the nature of this very engagement. The Muslim population in Sydney are engaged at all levels and stages, from the



general population through to those who are regarded as radical. This model of engagement places those believed or known to be radicals at the centre surrounded by the wider community. Through information sharing and local knowledge, the community can aid police and authorities identify and engage with those with radical beliefs. The practicalities of the community engagement model include many of the traditional aspects of community policing reviewed earlier: high visibility police presence by liaison officers within Muslim communities (at the mosques and centres and community events); consultations (symposia – including two of which were hosted by the University of Western Sydney); and the seeking of partnerships. The liaison officers distributed a booklet to help expand community knowledge about what is illegal, ‘Understanding Terrorism Laws’, as well as a two-page explanation of their community engagement model which were translated into other languages, including Arabic (Dunn, 2010).



*Source:* Counter-terrorism and Special Tactics Command (2011)

This model is rather interesting and intriguing. This model suggests that external agents and authorities such as the police cannot gain access to the “radical inner core” of Muslim communities as this core is hidden beneath layers of these Muslim communities. As well as this, the above model also suggests that as the radicals are surrounded by the wider Muslim communities, there is the problematic assumption that communities can defeat them. This is problematic as usually radicals have withdrawn from mainstream society and community organisations to form their own communities or to act individually. Essentially, the ideal underpinning the New South Wales Police Force Counter-terrorism Community Engagement Model is the reduction of the risk of terrorism by continually promoting a collaborative relationship where the purpose is clear, there is confidence in the approach adopted and confidence in governance. In seeking co-operation, this model seeks clarity of purpose as well as confidence in governing. These are the two areas, according to findings from fieldwork, which foster most suspicion towards authorities. Muslim communities are unsure and uneasy

about the exact nature of police engagement. As well as this, the Australian governments governing style whilst in theory encourages community participation, in reality, fails to consult at ground level. Instead, the Australian government developed these funded community-based strategies without community consultation, for communities to deliver. In terms of how communities can deliver such measures and programmes, some scholars have put forward proposals and theories. As such, the mechanisms and the rolling out of these programmes may have conflicting approaches from government to community perspective.

### **How Communities can contribute to CVE**

Briggs (2010) in her work suggests that there are in fact four ways in which communities can contribute to an efficient counter-terrorism strategy. Firstly, information sharing within communities can contribute to an effective counter-terror strategy because if information is shared with concern regarding particular individuals or groups, communities can act as an early warning sign for authorities. Australia was an advocate of this approach as they launched their “Let’s Look Out for Australia” campaign encouraging the public to report any suspicious behaviour and pass on any information that may be relevant. Secondly proposes Briggs (2010: 972) ‘communities can work upstream to prevent young people from becoming radicalised towards violence’. By reaching those at “pre-radicalisation” stage and preventing radicalisation through engagement and partnership with authorities, communities can contribute to improved counter-terror measures. It is within this framework that the Australian government sees the role of the Muslim population. Through CVE Initiatives, the Muslim population can work with those at risk and prevent them from becoming radicalised. Thirdly argues Briggs (2010) communities can tackle the grievances either real or perceived that allow the terrorist message to flourish. Communities within the Australian context contribute to this through engaging with those who are vulnerable to the terrorist message and also through education. Promotion of multiculturalism and inclusiveness can also make ethnic minorities feel more welcome and accepted in Australian wider society. Whilst Briggs’ work identifies some ways communities can contribute to combating terrorism, these are vague with scope for much interpretation. For instance, the notion that communities can work ‘upstream to prevent young people from becoming radicalised’ is unclear as no examples are given to illustrate how this may be in practice (BCR Guidelines, 2014). Tackling community grievances that foster terrorist recruitment is also a rather grey area with no indication as to how communities might undertake this, as well as decipher which grievances are real and which are perceived. The same grievance may be real for one individual and perceived for another. The trust and

partnership of the Muslim population is vital in this case as Briggs (2010) points out that ‘the police and security service cannot act without the consent of the communities they are there to protect’. Within the Australian context and also on a wider global scale, Muslim communities can build trust and a positive rapport with statutory agencies through both formal and informal engagement such as sporting events and information sessions, to allow effective counter-terrorism operations to take place. Murray (2006: 345) reiterates this point stating that, ‘it has been frequently pointed out that police alone cannot successfully achieve crime control and that the support of the community is critical—the same principles clearly apply to the prevention of terrorist acts’.

However, findings from fieldwork below show that what engagement involves for each party may differ. For community leaders and members, engagement was to be genuine and based on trust,

‘engagement should be honest – we should get to know one another and build a relationship in which we can talk to each other openly – I want to feel that I have a friend that I can and will want to – confide in- that will be meaningful engagement’.<sup>23</sup>

For authorities, engagement was also about building trust but seeking and gathering information was also an element;

‘for us engagement is about getting to know the community and its members – we can give them a face to come to talk to if they wish – it’s a means through which to share information’.<sup>24</sup>

The above highlight these differences with the latter explicitly stating that engagement to a degree was about intelligence gathering, an element feared by respondents of this research.

Previous studies conducted have identified mechanisms which ought to be included for successful, meaningful engagement. Spalek (2013) notes that for police officers, expectations of engagement can differ with some citing engagement as being about getting to know someone

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<sup>23</sup> Female, 22, CVE participant; unstructured interview conducted 8 October 2013 at 1pm in Sydney CBD; notes made immediately following interview.

<sup>24</sup> Male, Security Personnel; semi-structured interview conducted 12 October 2013 at 10am in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

or chatting with someone whilst others felt engagement was concerned with building relationships as a means to decipher the real issues within a community. For community members on the other hand, community engagement referred to shared goals of those working together as well as engagement at all levels. This engagement should also be epitomised by trust, respect and understanding of partnerships. Apparent here are the competing understandings of engagement from different stakeholders. From a police officer perspective, there appears to be an emphasis on the practical manner of engagement, i.e. sitting down and chatting whilst for Muslim community members the building of relationships is given greater credence than the practical aspect of engagement. Such remarks are reiterated in research findings where Muslim participants sought meaningful, fruitful engagement that leads to a result, whereas for police and government, engagement was more about chatting and less formal in terms of addressing issues. Such could nurture suspicion engagement is about intelligence. However, it must be noted that in the study conducted by Spalek (2013) the impact of engagement on the community has not gone unnoticed. The importance of considering the wider impact of counter-terrorism laws and operations on communities has been noted by one counter-terror officer who recognised that counter-terror operations impacted the community on a day to day basis due to ‘draconian powers that were introduced’ (male). The importance of considering the impact that counter-terror operations have on communities has been highlighted by another counter-terror officer as pivotal when engaging as ‘terrorists wish to use any grievances about counter-terrorism strategies as a recruitment tool’. This recognition however, appears to be more concerned with the impact on counter-terror operations and community relations, than the emotional, day to day impact on the community, which is a central component of fieldwork findings and therefore used to support the argument of this thesis. With this were concerns that engagement was more beneficial to government agencies and authorities than to local communities.

This issue of mutual benefit is a recurring one where engagement is involved particularly with police. Oppler (1997: 35) puts forward the argument that partnership policing can be defined as ‘a proactive leadership role in bringing disparate community groups such as the public, elected officials, government and other agencies together to focus on crime and community disorder problems’. However, priorities may be different between community members and police and this could make partnership working more difficult, for instance in a Muslim majority suburb of Sydney, Muslim community members seeking justice for vandalism whilst police seeking intelligence on extremism. Thatcher (2001) offers further

challenges facing policing and community partnerships. As partnership adopts a multi-agency approach: 'it can involve a wide variety of partners who have their own institutional, cultural, political and other values, and so there is potential for conflict between partners as a result of competing values' (Spalek, 2013: 102). Engagement with Muslim community members is a sensitive issue therefore due to different values and cultural practices in terms of engaging with wider population, i.e. gender segregation. In order for successful engagement therefore that is beneficial to all stakeholders involved, such programmes require timely inception and efficient rolling out.

### **The mechanisms of CVE Initiatives**

In order to reduce the risk of home-grown terrorism, the Attorney General's Department has distributed funding from £5,640 to £67,6891 to 2014 to community groups to run projects for a maximum of ten months with the aim of countering violent extremism. These grants take the form of a tender process whereby the government develops the idea and objectives of the grant and invites applications from those interested. These grants, according to the Building Community Resilience web page are given to communities who are at particular risk of violent extremism and extremist ideology. The objectives of these grants are fourfold according to the Countering violent extremism factsheet (BCR Guidelines, 2014); they are to;

- 1.'Identify and divert violent extremists and, when possible, support them in disengaging from violent extremism
2. Identify and support at-risk groups and individuals to resist and reject violent extremist ideologies
3. Build community cohesion and resilience to violent extremism
4. Achieve effective communications that challenge extremist messages and support alternatives'.

The above identify how CVE aims to counter violent extremism, according to those in government. Those on the ground however, despite this official rhetoric, hold a different view. Here lies the issue amongst the majority of respondents of this research that the threat posed by militant Islam did not warrant the establishment of projects aimed at countering violent

extremism. Furthermore, there was concern that the model adopted was not applicable to the Australian context, as argued by a community activist,

‘their information is based on misleading information and research based on other scenarios which are not applicable to Australia such as the UK model’.<sup>25</sup>

Rather, it has been suggested by those within local communities that the Australian government needed to show not only that they were ready and willing, but also actively tackling this threat. Moreover, since these measures were established after other events, the Australian government takes on that of a reactive disposition. This viewpoint is reiterated by community members, who state;

‘Governments in western societies look at what is going on in countries similar to ours and take precautions to prevent similar problems ...the Howard government initiated the CVE strategy...in an attempt to dampen down on any seditious behaviour’.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, these countering violent extremism programmes are regarded as targeting the Muslim contingent of the Australian population. Further stating the governments need to appear proactive with particular reference to addressing the threat posed by militant Islam, one community member feels;

‘The threat posed by ‘radical Islamists’ as they like to call us is exacerbated – the government makes the threat appear worse, then implements these laws and develops these ‘community programs’ so that it appears that they are ‘dealing with the issue’ ...it’s simply to look good’.<sup>27</sup>

Not only is it felt that these programmes are unnecessary, but also are in place to protect those regarded as “Australian”:

‘Because the Australian people are seen to be in danger from this force that is trying to take over and establish Shariah and a caliphate- they are in need of being protected from

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<sup>25</sup> Male, Community leader; unstructured interview conducted 1 October 2013 at 9.30am in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Female, 19, Community Activist, Politics graduate; unstructured interview conducted 29 September 2013 at 3pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

this – the government therefore implements these schemes in order to protect “its” people – the Australian government through the implementation of these CVE programs is playing protector. It is only protecting those who are seen to be “Australian” – it reinforces the notion that we are not part of this country’.<sup>28</sup>

The reasons why the countering violent extremism strategy was implemented and the need for community grants was alluded to by all participants of this research. There was general consensus amongst those unsupportive of such measures that the motivation behind such initiatives is an anti-Islamic agenda, for instance,

‘western governments have an anti-Islamic agenda and are already trying to de-Islamise communities so moderate Islam prevails, so they have created anti-terror laws which target Muslims and initiated programs that empower moderate groups and aim to undermine the more fundamentalist groups’.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these condemnations, there are those who regard these countering violent extremism programmes as necessary and essential in maintaining a healthy society, but for fear of being labelled as “traitor” to the government, do not express their support for these schemes,

‘I believe strongly that young people today of the Islamic faith- due to international influences such as Syria and the War on the Terror as well as domestic issues such as racial vilification and suspicion, social and economic deprivation- are vulnerable to the narratives and ideologies of extremism. There is a genuine need therefore for these programs in order to highlight inclusion rather than exclusion and to deliver a counter-narrative to this radical ideology. If we don’t – the ingredients and recipe for potential danger is there’.<sup>30</sup>

The majority of participants were adamant in their view that such schemes were unnecessary and merely another political tool. Government and security personnel on the other hand,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Male, Community Leader; unstructured interview conducted 24 September 2013 at 1pm in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

<sup>30</sup> Male, Community representative; CVE funding recipient; semi-structured interview conducted 30 September 2013 at 11am in Sydney, CBD; notes made following interview.

perceived the programmes necessary and proportionate to the threat posed. The need for these programmes, according to such persons is to prevent attacks like those of 7/7;

‘these CVE programmes are crucial to maintaining our national security and infrastructure...because of events elsewhere such as 7/7 we cannot undermine the threat posed by home grown terrorism...these projects are essential in addressing those issues which can drive someone to become radical’.<sup>31</sup> (male, Security Personnel)

Furthermore, with particular reference to the Muslim contingent,

‘We can’t deny the fact that some of the worst atrocities against humanity have been committed by those of radical Islamic beliefs: 9/11, London, Madrid, the soldier beheaded in London by two Islamists – yes it may be seen as if the Muslim community are focused upon but we need to curb this phenomenon at the bud, at the grass roots – and that is what these CVE programs aim to do through the promotion of moderate Islam at the youngest level’.<sup>32</sup>

The above reiterates commonly held sentiments amongst participants regarding the aims of these programmes; for some Muslim respondents, the aims of such measures are to further alienate and polarise their communities. Concerns were raised about the nature of community engagement as a tool of countering violent extremism in terms of utilising engagement as an actual means through which to have meaningful, genuine engagement or rather, using engagement as a method to gather intelligence. The theory behind these initiatives sheds some light on the perceived purpose of engagement.

The Countering Violent Extremism Strategy comprised of four key areas to inhibit violent extremism. The identification of potential sources of extremist ideology and violent extremism, through the sharing of information within the community is seen crucial in combating violent extremism. Secondly, in order to address violent extremism, understanding the motives of recruits as well as the methods of recruiters is essential. However, well documented is the contention that remains with little clarity and agreement on the path and

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<sup>31</sup> Male, Security Personnel; unstructured interview conducted 14 October 2013 at 4pm in Coogee, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>32</sup> Male, Government official; semi-structured interview conducted 21 September 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.



process of radicalisation. Radicalisation is not a monolithic process and strategies aimed at addressing the root causes need to recognise that one solution may not be relevant or adequate for all. Referral and support in order to support diversion and rehabilitation were noted as areas with a role in countering violent extremism. This involves a multi-agency collaborative approach with stakeholders ranging from healthcare to education to housing and employment services. Education initiatives have been noted as another key area of countering violent extremism so as in order to equip individuals with the knowledge and understanding to reject radical ideology and engagement in illegal activity. The final key area noted in the Countering Violent Extremism policy document is communication. The communication of non-violent key messages and counter-narratives is important in order to highlight that issues can be addressed through non-violent means as well as to educate. The CVE document goes on to summarise its motives in the following paragraph,

‘While there is no proven causal link between social disadvantage and terrorist behaviour, social and economic hardship can lead individuals, families and even communities to be more receptive to extremist ideologies that might promise more attractive alternatives or seek to explain such hardships as injustice imposed by external actors. Protecting and assisting the poorest, most vulnerable and most marginalised populations can help address local sources of grievance, frustration and disenfranchisement that terrorists try to exploit. Improved access to health, vocationally relevant education and employment opportunities can create conditions less conducive to extremist views and propaganda’ (Gleeson, 2014: 65).

Although the above emphasises the need to protect and assist those most in need, these initiatives do not appear to directly address these possible causes of violent extremism. According to this strategy, the benefit of these strategies is that ‘the threat to Australia of violent extremism is reduced as individuals and groups choose non-violent expression of views’. The success of these strategies depends on whose hands this funding falls into and their intentions. Who is in receipt of such monetary value is crucial therefore, in implementing a programme that meets the above criteria.

In order to counter violent extremism, these grants seek to give communities the skills and resources to understand and actively address intolerant or extremist messages and discourage violent extremism (CVE, 2010). Moreover, funding of local initiatives will support

people who may be vulnerable to extremist views due to personal experience of disengagement and marginalisation. The education of groups and individuals about the avenues available to participate positively in political debate is a further objective stressed through the Building Community Resilience Grants web page regarding countering violent extremism programmes. It has been noted by politicians and researchers alike that the greatest threat posed to Australia and its interests comes from those who follow a violent, extremist interpretation of Islam. However, information regarding these community programs states that they are not specifically targeting religiously inspired extremism and encourages proposals that address violent extremism in all its forms, whether it is ideologically, politically or religiously inspired (Gleeson, 2014). The former is merely rhetorical however; other organisations can apply for funding but the vast majority have been Muslim. This is interesting due to the stance of many representatives of Muslim communities that it is their community who are “being targeted” by these grants but still apply, and also at a governmental level that such programmes are not aimed at Muslim organisations but it is those who are in receipt. Further program guidelines highlight that proposals for community initiatives should address issues of violent extremism, radicalisation and/or factors that may contribute to susceptibility to radicalisation (Kabir, 2011). In order to provide assistance to people in deciphering what activities they could implement in their program to counter violent extremism, the Australian government has produced a number of information leaflets on what constitutes violent extremism.

Whilst it is important to offer an explanation as to what these concepts mean, the Australian government through these information leaflets fails to address the definitional issues around these politically charged terms. Moreover, whilst such definitions do not implicitly refer to Islam or Muslims, the timing of such measures serves as a pointer towards the Muslim population in the aftermath of 9/11 and subsequent terror attacks. The anti-Muslim discourse adopted by the Australian government under Howard, which will be discussed further in a subsequent chapter, to justify such measures further points to the targeting of Muslim communities. Indeed, citing interfaith dialogue and youth mentoring as possible activities, implies that religious beliefs may need to be addressed to combat extremism.

Offering examples of activities, the Building Community Resilience Team states media activities which give marginalised communities a voice, skills and leadership training, referral and diversionary programs-community forums and outreach events to promote social inclusion, local peer support to at-risk individuals as well as intercultural and interfaith

education in schools and universities are activities that could perhaps reduce and counter violent extremist. Despite this list of activities, there are no guidelines as to how to utilise these resources to counter extremism. There are no lesson plans or ideas given on how to deliver such interfaith programmes for instance. In terms of delivering projects, components are to be eligible for delivery through online platforms and tools for instance, electronic media, interactive portals and online portals which allow opportunities for networking and discussion. The grant scheme placed particular emphasis on education, increasing skills and the use of the internet as a means to resist the influence of violent extremism. The internet, according to these programmes was to increase community resilience to violent extremism.

This focus on online platforms is significant as it highlights the government's recognition that the internet is a source of radicalisation and the hope that through alternative learning resources, violent extremism can be countered. As well as this however, it is widely known that online platforms are a source of radicalisation and recruitment for violent extremism. Therefore, by training these individuals in internet skills, one may actually be facilitating access to online radicalisation. Hence, it is not quite clear how these initiatives as such seek to counter radicalisation. With reference to Syria and the potential for recruitment, Bergin (2009:23) stresses the importance of online initiatives that aim to counter violent extremism as he states, 'any campaign undertaken by authorities here to discourage Australians from fighting in Syria should include a strong online effort to counter extremist recruiters'. Again, caution is needed as such a measure may be counter-productive and in fact lead to the possibility of viewing radical sites. Hussain and Saltman (2014: 51) notes, with further impetus within the Australian context that funding could go

'towards helping existing initiatives improve their online presence and further develop their social media outreach ... [S]pecific online initiatives could include fully fledged websites, social media campaigns, a series of videos hosted on video sharing platforms such as YouTube, and forums that discuss pertinent topics related to extremism'.

Whilst in theory at least, such measures seem beneficial, there remains the possibility of negative and dangerous material also being shared. It should also be noted, that this type of project requires technical capabilities that not all may have. CVE programmes therefore, argues Bergin (2009) have a role in building this capability with individuals and projects best placed to deliver counter narrative projects.

## **Application Process**

In order to assess who are the most capable and suitable initiatives to deliver a countering violent extremism campaign, applicants are required to complete an online application form. Along with the application form, those interested in receiving funding are to also submit an estimated budget for the proposed project including individual budget items. On receipt of this, provided it is received by the closing date, the Building Community Resilience assessment team who comprise government personnel will assess applications with other relevant commonwealth agencies and departments. Duplication of work or projects that has previously been conducted are not favoured. The building community resilience assessment team receives assistance at this stage of the process from state and territory representatives as to 'ensure the quality and appropriateness of applications by seeking information from CVE partner agencies with broader reach than the Attorney General's Department' (BCR Guidelines, 2014). Applications are assessed through criteria, with each criterion carrying a percentage weighting ranging from 20% to 10%. Such criterion includes how well the proposal addresses and meets the objectives and aims of the countering violent extremism strategy using methods and tools deemed to be most effective, for instance, online portals and interactive forums. The criterion marks candidates on their experience in managing similar projects or activities. Applicants may consist of community members who may not have the expertise or experience in using online resources or be familiar with interactive social media, but have the passion and community knowledge to deliver a potentially effective countering violent extremism project.

For some participants, a highly contentious component of these countering violent extremism programmes is the application process and assessment for funding. The process was summed up by one community leader:

'it is a fairly straightforward process, involves the government advertising when grants are available, there are selection criteria and eligibility requirements and then a complicated application form is filled out. This is problematic for those who have a poor grasp of English. Then usually out of 100-200 applications about a dozen or up to 40 organisations are selected (depending on the funding pool)'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Male, Community Leader; unstructured interview conducted 1 December 2013 in Sydney CBD at 2.30pm; notes made during interview.

However, it appears that although the process is relatively clear-cut, there are those who will go to great lengths to be successful in their bid:

‘most organisations don’t even write their own applications – they employ and pay someone for a day that has probably written these types of things before and knows what language to use and how to tick all the right boxes to write their application to increase their chances and likelihood of success. It’s not fair on those who write their own application and have a genuine interest in helping the community but can’t afford someone to help them’.<sup>34</sup>

Once applicants have been notified they are the successful, they then begin to implement their programme. This however has proven quite difficult. One countering violent extremism practitioner notes that old tensions and new working relationships can be strenuous:

‘Because this CVE policy and community engagement has brought together a range of players who have not really worked together before and between whom there is tension, it has been difficult’.<sup>35</sup>

Due to the nature of this engagement, different stances on the threat posed by radical Islam can pose difficulties. This was felt by the majority of participants, for instance;

‘The police and government think that there is a very strong threat of terrorism here in Australia – but us here in the community- yes we recognise there is the potential but not on the scale that those up there think’.<sup>36</sup>

The above comment highlights the difficult working relationship this community engagement fosters. Moreover, such a comment reiterates and underlines the differences in theoretical assumptions with grass level practicalities and concerns. As such, concern was raised that anything was permissible under the countering violent extremism banner, as one female community member states,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Male, CVE funded practitioner; unstructured interview conducted 4 December 2013 at 10am in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>36</sup> Male, Community Leader; unstructured interview conducted 1 February 2014 at 2pm in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

‘You develop your own project or program under the banner of CVE and BCR – but what does that actually involve or mean – some groups are running sport programs under this banner whilst others are holding classes on the teachings of the Prophet, peace be upon Him...anything goes as long as you relate it somehow to countering violent extremism’.<sup>37</sup>

The above offers further support for the idea that there lie discrepancies between theory and practice at government level with that at grass-roots level. Such a comment poses the question as to the exact government motive of these schemes due to the lack of accountability these programmes are held to. Such implies a need to be seen to be engaging in counter-terrorism activities on the part of the government; an argument that is made throughout this thesis regarding these initiatives. The following comment too serves to reiterate and evidence such claims:

‘Once we received notification that we were successful in our grant application we were given the first instalment of the funds – you get it in three parts; start, middle and end – like the majority of it, then you have to set goals and milestones which you get to make yourself and when you reach your milestone you are given the second instalment then you get the third on completion when you send in a report of your progress and what you achieved. We don’t have any dealings with the AGD [Attorney General’s Department], they never ring us and ask how we are getting on or anything- there is no correspondence between the government and the community group -they just leave us to it’.<sup>38</sup>

Interesting with regard to the above comment are the references to the lack of accountability to authorities once funding has been granted. When correlated with the assessment criteria, the concerns raised by participants of this research may have some grounding in that this funding is to make the government merely appear they are proactive whilst in reality, once funding is granted, these local communities are on their own. Interestingly, the percentage weighting for the assessment against which proposals will be marked, based on their demonstration of the need for such programs is only 10%; ‘demonstrated

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<sup>37</sup> Female, Community member; semi-structured interview conducted 14 January 2014 at 10am in Sydney, CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>38</sup> Male, Security personnel, CVE participant; unstructured interview conducted 21 January 2014 at 1pm in Bondi, Sydney; notes made during interview.

clear need for the proposed project, including evidence base, the implications of the project not going ahead and consideration of project extension for broad, national reach' (BCR Guidelines, 2014). The need for such programs, one would think would be an assessment which is ranked highly. The need for these programs does not appear to be an important factor in this assessment which again reiterates the above issue raised by participants that these programmes are a tool through which the government can be perceived to be proactive. As well as this, such reflections serve to highlight and offer some evidence to the argument that such measures epitomise the top-down approach within the Australian government with the creation of projects and initiatives to fulfil policy objectives without questioning their need at ground level. Projects which receive funding under this scheme may be putting themselves in danger due to the nature as well as scope and reach of this funding. Risk is an element of this assessment criteria but it again is featured lastly on the criterion information sheet used to assess these countering violent extremism proposals. The risk posed to practitioners as well as participants of these initiatives, is relative due to the fact that receiving government funding could be seen as working with the government and "being on their side". Moreover, by receiving a grant to undertake a countering violent extremism project, the wider Australian population may see this as confirming that those who are receiving funding are related to the problem; why else would they be involved in a scheme if it was of no benefit to them or their community?

Participants related the above to the encouragement of applications from those who have already received funding. Such posed questions and raised suspicion as to the nature of the relationship between some organisations and the government for the majority of respondents. Claims were made by participants of this research that it is those who have a "friendly" relationship with the government receive funding:

'The funds for these programs are given to the same people and organisations every time...it is always the same old same old'.<sup>39</sup>

Others too, are fearful that those who receive funding are not using it for the right means or purpose,

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<sup>39</sup> Male, Community leader; unstructured interview conducted 12 January 2014 at 9am in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

‘The money for these programs fall into the wrong hands, it isn’t the right people getting the money, the ones that are receiving funding are not even running the programs that they say they are’.<sup>40</sup>

Yet others blame the government for political advancement and being tactical,

‘It is a case of the usual suspects getting the funds over and over because of their connections with the government. The recent granting of 2.5million to the LMA (Lebanese Moslem Association) is an example of trying to buy the Lebanese vote just before an election’.<sup>41</sup>

These comments reiterate the fear and unease felt by participants that funding was being given to those who were perhaps not best placed to be offering community based initiatives. As well as this, such comments serve to further stress the tension that is rife within and amongst Muslim communities and also indicate how these countering violent extremism initiatives actually counter community cohesion by bringing divisions within the communities to the fore. Related to this, were concerns amongst participants regarding the recipients of funding. For instance, despite the claim that newly formed organisations are welcome to apply, the above criterion clearly states an advantage to those who already have received funding. As well as this, the criteria clearly favour organisations with management structures run by educated individuals. Final assessment is then made on each application based on the application form, referees’ comments as well as an overall policy and value for money appraisal by the department (BCR Guidelines, 2014). The department will then offer advice to the Attorney General on the results who then makes the final funding decision at his own discretion. Moreover, in order to be eligible for this grant scheme, applications must be from a non- profit organisation as proposals from ‘individuals, political organisations, Australian government, state or territory government agencies or commercial or for-profit organisations’ (BCR Guidelines, 2014) will not be accepted. Church groups, religious organisations as well as school and universities which are not seeking to undertake academic research activities are also eligible candidates. The eligibility of applicants was therefore a cause for concern for those involved in this research.

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<sup>40</sup> Female, 21, student; unstructured interview conducted 14 October 2013 at 1pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>41</sup> Male, Community activist; unstructured interview conducted 22 September 2013 at 3pm in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.



Such concern was then related to the distribution of funding and questions arose as to the recipients of such funding.

### **Distribution of Grants**

As this thesis is concerned with a particular time frame, since the inception of these CVE programmes under the BCR grant scheme in 2011 until 2012 when fieldwork ended, there were 20 successful applications. To 2013 however, there have been some 355 of these schemes rolled out. In the time period this research is concerned with, out of the 20 distributed, eight of these grants had been received by local initiatives in the state of New South Wales. Nine of these were received by the state of Victoria. Important to remember here is that these states are home to the largest contingent of the Muslim populations in Australia, with Sydney being home to the largest proportion followed closely by Melbourne. Furthermore, six of these grants were received by either ethnic organisations of a Muslim background or were located in predominantly Muslim populated areas. This is an interesting point as it highlights the role ethnicity plays in organising Islam in Australia; that is that Muslims in Australia are perhaps categorised by their ethnic background. This is perhaps related to the observed ethnic compartmentalisation of Muslim organisations in Sydney. One of these Building Community Resilience grants was received by a National State University in Victoria to develop a curriculum for teaching Islamic studies in Australian primary and secondary schools, whilst one was received by a University offering sport as a tool of engagement in Sydney. In terms of the distribution of grants in this time period, recipients resided in the Muslim majority states and whose common denominator was “Muslim”.

Whilst an examination of these schemes within a national context is worthwhile in highlighting the geographical distribution of these Building Community resilience grants tasked with countering violent extremism, this thesis is concerned with the state of NSW and further the Sydney area and as such will focus on programmes located in that geographical area. Although concerned with those grants distributed within a particular time period, it is important to recognise the growth in these schemes. For the first year 2011 to 2012, 20 grants were distributed; 2012-2013 saw 22 such grants whilst 2013-2014 saw only nine of these grants. With regard to the state of New South Wales, eight local initiatives were the recipients of these grants in the year 2011-2012, a further eight received funding in the year 2012-2013 and funding was granted to three local organisations for the year 2013-2014. Some of those who received the largest grant sums were in the state of New South Wales, for instance, the

Lebanese Moslem Association, Auburn Community Development Association, Burwood Council and All Together Now. As previously alluded to above, recipients of building community resilience grants, were predominantly ethnic minority groups seeking to cater for their community, for instance, Somali Youth Outreach Project and The Association of Hazaras Incorporated. It is necessary to point out here that it has been stated by both policy makers and countering violent extremism initiative practitioners that these projects are not directly targeted at one ethnic community over another yet the majority of these groups cater for an ethnic group of a Muslim background which perhaps illustrates the ethnical organisational structures of Muslims in Sydney. This too further serves to substantiate the sentiment amongst participants that it is Muslim communities who are the focus and target of Australian counter-terror measures.

Indeed, there have been a number of organisations who have been the successful recipients of these grants more than once. Such recipients have been the Lebanese Moslem Association which in two separate funding rounds were the recipients of significant funding on each occasion. The Forum on Australian Islamic Relations also received funding on separate occasions. Burwood Council and Horn of Africa Relief Development Agency too were recipients on more than one occasion. Successive recipients of these grants whilst genuinely deserving of the funding, may be at risk of being labelled as favourites or allies of the government. This too was a sentiment raised during discussions with participants:

‘when it is always the same people and organisations who are in receipt of funding, you begin to question the nature of their engagement’.<sup>42</sup>

As illustrated above, engagement with communities through the funding of projects may cause tension both amongst and within communities. This is an issue when communities are regarded as a vital component of countering extremism. Indeed, the inefficient running of these programmes exacerbates the risk of creating further problems both with and amongst the Muslim population and wider Australian society. There has been a significant impact of these countering violent extremism projects on the Muslim population, highlighted by community members. One significant impact, raised numerous times has been the divisive element these projects can have, as one activist states, ‘These programs are more divisive within the

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<sup>42</sup> Female, CVE funded practitioner; unstructured interview conducted at 3pm on 14 December 2013 in Coogee, Sydney; notes made during interview.

community and also between communities from other religious groups who feel left out' (Sheik)

Further illustrating these tensions, a countering violent extremism practitioner states,

'There is already tension within the Muslim community and these programs further that tension by giving money to the same people and groups and organisations all the time'.<sup>43</sup>

Further emphasising the impact of these programmes on the community are the negative connotations the Muslim population hold with regard to these programmes and the Australian government, for instance, instilling fear and a sense of 'the other', suspect community, racist vilification, discriminatory education and employment opportunities. However, despite the wealth of negative characteristics placed on these programmes, there are those who see these programmes as being of some benefit within the Muslim population as well as wider Australian society. The promotion of inclusiveness, dialogue, education about each other and engagement are some of the strengths these countering violent extremism projects can offer, for instance '...empowering organisations with an infusion of funds' as well as 'they can be helpful with countering racism and discrimination in some ways'. Moreover, these projects can offer opportunities to learn more about the faith from credible sources other than the internet and social media as illustrated by this young male,

'At the start, I didn't really want to go to this program but my mum said it would be good for me so I said I would go to see what it was like. I am glad I did now because I have made great friends but I have also learnt a lot more about my faith and what is required of me as a Muslim. It was also good for me to learn about non-Muslims and to see that we really aren't that different. I have more respect now for my Muslim community as well as the wider Australian society. I am happy I went and I would tell other young boys like me to go'.<sup>44</sup>

A potent issue raised time and time again within the Muslim segment of the Australian population is the confusion over their identity, another central focus of this thesis. This

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<sup>43</sup> Male, CVE practitioner; unstructured interview conducted at 5pm on 13 September 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>44</sup> Male, 21, Student; Lebanese; semi-structured interview conducted at 3pm on 11 October 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

respondent credits these countering violent extremism projects with helping him in establishing his identity;

‘I was confused about my identity and who I was and one of my mates went to one of these programs funded by the government but run by the local community. He suggested I go to learn more about Islam...the true Islam and perhaps give me some guidance on my life. It taught me that I can be Australian and Muslim at the same time and that I can be included in the Australian way and be a “Mozzie” ...I suppose in a way it did counter-radicalise me because at the end of it I no longer seen the West and non-Muslims being against me...I now have some great Christian friends’.<sup>45</sup>

The tension surrounding Muslim and non-Muslim relations was another issue raised by participants but credit was given to these CVE programmes for creating opportunities to address these issues, for instance, ‘these programs foster relations between Muslims and non-Muslims’ as well as

‘Youth mentoring is vital in today’s society as it provides mate-ship and camaraderie which are also Australian values...CVE projects therefore fulfil two important objectives in that they offer mentoring for individuals who need guidance whilst also promoting Australian values’.<sup>46</sup>

Apparent therefore are the mixed reactions and attitudes towards these countering violent extremism initiatives. Indeed, those supportive of such programmes are generally those who are in receipt of funding or have family members or friends engaged in such programmes. Whether genuine or not, such individuals felt there was a need to engage with countering violent extremism measures. Whilst more men were supportive than women, the women who were supportive spoke of their fear that if something was not done to tackle this alleged threat then they would bear the repercussions in term of racial abuse, vilification and mental well-being. Men, on the other hand were fearful for their place in society; it was apparent they did not wish to lose their status as a community or programme leader. This was despite the negative connotations that come with engaging in such activities. Although,

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<sup>45</sup> Male, 18, Student, Turkish; semi-structured interview conducted at 12 noon on 9 October 2013 in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>46</sup> Female, Community activist; unstructured interview conducted at 11am on 12 October 2013 in Sydney, CBD; notes made during interview.

few in numbers, advocates of these programmes were adamant in their belief that these initiatives are beneficial not only to the Muslim population, but also in contributing to a more harmonious Australian society in general. Despite this being the justification for such measures, findings from fieldwork highlighted throughout not only this chapter, but this thesis, suggest such programmes are more divisive than inclusive and serve to maintain the Muslim population as a suspect community.

## **Conclusion**

Emerging in 2011 as part of the wider counter-terror framework, the Countering Violent Extremism Initiative sought to address the root causes of violent extremism. A government funded initiative devolving power to local communities to aid in the fight against extremism, CVE programmes were to be implemented by community groups and organisations. Central to this idea therefore, was the role of the community as they were seen, by government, as a further agent in the fight against extremism.

Central to the successful role of communities as agent in combating extremism, was the need for communities to engage with other government authorities. This paved the way for a community engagement strategy. Such a strategy was to involve the communicating and collaboration of local communities with authorities about radical individuals. This idea was modelled on the community engagement model, discussed above, which saw radicals surrounded by the wider community. However, this is a problematic assumption as radicals tend to have withdrawn from wider society and formed their own circles. This would therefore make it difficult for the wider community, and indeed authorities to engage. Nonetheless, it was believed that communities would have the ability to infiltrate these radical groups and address their concerns. For Muslim communities however, this is where the greatest concern lies. Great discomfort was evident when participants spoke of community engagement. Concern was raised as to the nature of engagement as well as the degree to which such engagement was genuine. For many participants, community engagement emerged in a post 9/11 era as a means of community surveillance. According to participants, community engagement was not concerned with getting to know one another and building a relationship, but rather a vehicle of intelligence gathering. Indeed, there was anger and concern that these programmes were concerned with radicalisation which was not regarded as a serious issue by the community, but that concerns communities did have, such as unemployment, drugs and poor educational attainment, were not being addressed. Again, here is a further illustration of

the top-down governing approach whereby the government sets the agenda minus the communities' consultation.

Moreover, participants felt that community engagement, because it manifested in a post 9/11 era, was targeting Muslims. There was anger and a sense of bewilderment that again, Muslims on a global scale were bearing the brunt of terror attacks claimed in the name of Islam. This was seen as a further example of the discrimination against Muslims as well as evidence of the isolation of Muslims as Australia's internal other.

These attitudes and sentiments were further substantiated for Muslim participants when the distribution of these CVE grants was looked at. As well as being implemented as a means to police the Muslim community, the fact that many of the recipients of these programmes were Muslim organisations served as a further illustration that Muslims indeed, were the target audience of such programmes.

For participants, great suspicion surrounded not only these programmes, but also those who were in receipt of funding. There was concern and questions posed as to the legitimacy of those who received funding. Fieldwork supports such conclusions as some organisations who were in receipt of funding had failed to implement such a programme. Furthermore, participants were uneasy that it appeared to be the same organisations who were repeat recipients. Participants questioned the nature of these organisations relationship with authorities because of this repeat funding. The fact that previous recipients are in an advantageous position concretised this suspicion for participants. Some participants however were supportive of and welcomed such programmes. It was felt that there was a need to address the growing risk to radicalisation in Sydney and that local communities were the best suited to deliver. Unsurprising however that such recipients were those who were, or had previously been recipients of this funding.

These divisions evident between those supportive and those suspicious of such programmes led to great animosity and division both within and amongst Muslim communities. For participants, the impact of these measures was divisive and served to alienate their community as well as maintain their stature as the suspect community, not only within Australia, but also globally. As well as this, because said programmes were being run by Muslims in an environment epitomised by an anti-Muslim discourse and language which

opposed multiculturalism; participants felt it served as a confirmation to the wider society that terrorism and violent extremism were indeed synonymous with Islam. The discourse adopted and utilised by those in power such as the media and the government therefore serve as a catalyst in creating and maintaining the current stature of Muslims.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Discursive Securitisation of Muslims in Australia**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the discourse within the Australian context surrounding national security and how identity is constructed around the perceived threat posed by radical Muslims. This chapter will then examine the political and identity issues underlying these discourses and as such will put forward the argument that within the Australian context, the very term “security” is a social construct fostered through discourse. It is the consequence of a process of “securitisation” whereby what is deemed undesirable or posing a threat, then becomes a security issue. An investigation into the political discourse will then follow which will highlight the negative discursive nature of the rhetoric adopted by the Australian government particularly under Howard, the media and by extension, the wider Australian society with regard to the Muslim population. This negative discourse favours a damaging, stereotyping narrative whereby the Muslim contingent of the population appears as the “perpetrator” and all others as the victim. Moreover, it has been suggested by some (Aly 2007, Kabir 2006, Dunn 2006) that elements of what Edward Said (1978) denotes as “Orientalist stereotypes” are evident in this discourse, whereby those from the West view those from the East as “the other”, different and that the worldviews of these two civilisations will clash at some point due to their opposing beliefs. This chapter aims to highlight and stress that the negative discourse promoted by Howard is associated with media attention and negative political rhetoric. The impact and repercussions of this discourse, although contradicted by the Australian government, can be linked to racism and marginalisation and, of course, fear and suspicion surrounding those from the Muslim population. This chapter will conclude that security in the Australian context is a social construct which the Australian government tweaks to dress the undesirables as a threat and gain public support for its actions, be it military intervention or new counter-terror measures, therefore resulting in a process of securitisation.



## **Discourse as language**

It is perhaps important at this juncture to investigate and examine what discourse means and encompasses. There is much literature on what discourse is, ranging from talk and dialogue to a system of meaning production. For the purposes of this chapter and thesis, discourse is defined as meanings that are socially constructed through language. Essentially, therefore, what is socially constructed through discourse in this instance is the inherent otherness and difference of Muslim minorities in the West. Baker et al (2013) support this assertion arguing that Islam and Muslims are portrayed as different, inferior and threatening. Furthermore, Muslims and Islam are associated with conflict and presented as causes for concern. In light of this, Shepherd (2006: 20) contends that, ‘discourses are understood here as systems of meaning-production rather than simply statements or language, encompassing narratives, texts and images, systems that “fix” meaning, however temporarily, and enable us to make sense of the world’. This is a particular viewpoint of critical discourse analysis which ‘...aims primarily to illustrate and describe the relationship between textual and social and political processes’ (Jackson, 2008: 278). Moreover, as stressed by Foucault (1972: 143), discourse ‘consists of not – of no longer – treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’. Hjelm (2011: 134) notes that ‘discourse analysis examines how actions are given meaning and how identities are produced in language use’. This point is given further credence in subsequent chapters discussing identity formation where respondents reiterate the impact discourse has on this identity formation. This is substantiated by the work of Flood et al (2012) who assert that Western countries view Muslim groups as a threat to their survival and so take measures to protect against this threat using the media to frame and represent Muslims in a negative light.

Without any doubt, a significant component of the discourse surrounding terrorism, Muslims and Islam is in the media. It is extremely well documented both in academic and non-academic realms that the media has a crucial role to play in creating the type of discourse that surrounds an issue, in this instance terrorism and violent extremism. Almond (2007) contends that in representing Islam, there has been a tendency to stress an “other”, different, threatening Orient. These implications are evident in fieldwork findings from research in terms of the impact of such a negative representation.

Whilst the events of 9/11 saw a greater focus on “Islamic terrorism”, Muslims and violent extremism and a change in the media representation and coverage, one cannot surpass

the fact that negative reporting is evident in Australian reporting as early as the 1970s. The impetus for this it is believed is the surge in migration from the Lebanon following the Lebanon Civil War as well as significant events in the Muslim world in recent history such as the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Gulf War in 1991.

### **Understanding Discourse: Role of the Media**

There are a number of theories or conceptual frameworks which are relevant and useful in uncovering the motivational reasoning behind particular styles of reporting. One such theoretical framework is that of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis according to Gleeson (2014: 23) is ‘an approach to the analysis of language that looks at patterns of language across texts as well as the social and cultural contexts in which texts occur’. Moreover, discourse analysis allows an examination of how phenomena are ‘accomplished discursively, how identities and social reality are constructed in interaction’ (Hjelm, 2011: 139). Additionally, Berger (2016: 4) posits that discourse analysis deals ‘with our use of language and the way our language shapes our identities, our social relationships and our social and political world’. Essentially, as Eco (1979) suggests, discourse analysis fosters an investigation not only into content but also into style and expression. McGregor (2013: 108) argues that this approach allows for the examination of power behind knowledge bases stating that undertaking a discourse analysis approach ‘allows the investigation into what types of knowledge are being presented to an audience and who is constructing and presenting these discourses, raising issues of power’. Hjelm (2011: 140) contends with the work of McGregor (2013) that critical discourse analysis ‘focuses on power and ideology in discourse and acknowledges that there is a reality outside of discourse that is reproduced and changed discursively’. Foucault’s (1972: 324) extensive work on discourse and power highlights the importance of power structures in developing knowledge through discourse, contending that ‘representations of knowledge are developed through types of discourse – discussions that are framed by the current accepted norms of institutions that are in positions of power within the intellectual establishment’. The issue of hegemonic discourses is alluded to by Hjelm (2011: 142) who asserts that critical discourse analysis ‘provides a powerful method analysing what is taken as common knowledge and how these discursive constructions perpetuate particular ways of thinking by suppressing alternative discourses’. The media is one such establishment as one of the main sources through which knowledge of a particular subject is gained. Indeed, ‘discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, when and where’ (Parker, 2002: 245). For many, knowledge regarding Muslims, Islam or terrorism is sought through the media as it

delivers instant bite size pieces of information. Moreover, McGregor (2013: 110) argues that media messages are inculcated with particular discourses which underpin and define media representations and as such, are 'responsible for power relationships developed in terms of inclusion and exclusion'. Indeed, Alsultany's (2012) study of television dramas unearthed the sympathetic portrayal of Arab and Muslim Americans as victims of hate crimes or oppressed women. In doing so, argues Alsultany (2012), there emerges the ideological effect of appearing multicultural and sensitive to cultural issues. With this too, however, is the ability of the state to continue to implicitly practice racist policies. Indeed, as Alsultany (2012: 50) contends there emerges a 'new kind of racism, one that purports to be anti-racist while perpetrating and justifying racism'. The work of Foucault (1972) serves to reiterate this finding with regard to representations within the media. Foucault (1972: 27) asserts that the media are the power holders in determining 'how it is that one particular statement appeared rather than another'. It is this concept of selection of coverage which is paramount in determining the motivations behind media sources coverage of particular stories over others in highlighting "the voice" being presented to the community.

Within the Australian context, this voice appears to be the mainstream Australian society over that of Muslims. Baudrillard (1995) suggests that the media is used as a theatre through which to frame terrorism and contends that the Gulf War turned thereby into a media event. Related to the above is Baudrillard's (2012) comment that the media chooses which elements of a story to cover and emphasise and which to suppress. Moreover, this media representation is that of a negative portrayal of both Muslims and Islam. Aly (2007) contends that within the Australian context, 'media discourse has emerged which implicates Australian Muslims, constructing them as a homogenous monolith with an underlying implication that Islam, and by association Australian Muslims, is secular resistant and at odds with the values of the liberal democratic state' (McGregor, 2013). Such a finding is substantiated by the work of Van Dijk (1993: 93) on racism and discourse which highlighted 'how various grammatical structures, may express or signal the perspectives and biases of white group speakers'. This is evident within the Australian context whereby the discourse adopted by Howard was epitomised by white Anglo-centric values and perspectives as the hegemonic discourse. In addition, Australian Muslims were refused a voice in media coverage with regard to the dominant discourse on terrorism which therefore marginalised them. Indeed, van Dijk (1993: 97) suggests that the study of discourse can illuminate 'the role of text and talk in the social, political and cultural structures and processes that define the system of ethnic and racial

dominance of white groups over minorities’. Participants too sought to communicate their sense of marginalisation;

‘on a topic that we supposedly know so much about – the media and government simply out their own spin on it with the language they used which just placed us as the bad guy again – we are always “the Other”’.<sup>47</sup>

As above, the language used and the rhetoric adopted by the Australian government, the media as well as those within wider Australian society who support the rhetoric, according to participants, of the government have had a detrimental impact. The vast majority of those consulted as part of this research felt that the language adopted by the Australian government and in particular, the media, was impacting negatively on their way of life in Australia. This is reminiscent of the work of Foucault who contended that the representation of Islam in the West was detrimental and would have negative impacts in terms of community cohesion and solidarity (Afray and Robinson, 2005). Moreover, with regard to Foucault and his notions of hegemonic discourse concerning Islam, the concern is raised as to why the ‘West has insisted for so long on seeing the power it exercises as judicial and negative rather than as technical and positive’ (Rainbow, 1991: 62).<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Foucault’s writing on Islam, particularly following the Iranian Revolution, portrayed the Revolution as a unifying event epitomised by solidarity.<sup>49</sup> For Foucault, the Iranian Revolution signalled a new phenomenon of “political spirituality” through the emergence of a militant Islam whose discourse would hold enormous power. As such, Foucault opined that this new movement would seek a fundamental break from the modern Western order. Indeed, this discourse would ‘alter the global strategic equilibrium’ (Afray and Robinson, 2005: 241). A critique of Foucault’s representation however, is his failure to appreciate human agency and autonomy instead attributing a collective unity to the Iranian Revolution. Moreover, Foucault has been criticised for his one-sided representation of modernity that fails to take into gender and sexuality as well as feminist ideologies and arguments. Nevertheless, Foucault’s assertion of the Western depiction and portrayal of Orientalists as inferior and different remains, as evidenced through fieldwork. The use of

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<sup>47</sup> Female, Community member; semi-structured interview conducted at 4pm on 29 September 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>48</sup> This remark sets the tone for how the West would portray the “East”; that is as inferior and as those over whom the West could have power. The hegemonic discourse evident today stems from the ideas put forward by Foucault.

<sup>49</sup> Foucault’s thoughts formed the basis of Edward Said’s Orientalism arguments regarding negative Western portrayal of the East. Government and media discourse epitomises this portrayal.

language to imply danger, threat and fear towards the Muslim contingent was noted by all participants of this research, for instance,

‘the words the government and media use when referring to terrorism and violent extremism are negative...they imply that we are totally incompatible with Australia because of “our way of life” ... that creates fear towards us and sets us as “them” ...it creates a big divide between non-Muslims and Muslims’.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, it was felt that the discourse adopted by the Australian government and the media failed to distinguish Muslim identities; they see Muslims as a monolith,

‘there are different sects of Muslims...they [the government] just say Muslims as a whole without noting that there are different communities within “Muslim” ...therefore we all get tarred with the same brush...radicals, extremists etc...’.<sup>51</sup>

“The Other” is hence a framework utilised continuously within the Australian media and government to marginalise the Muslim population. Moreover, the other is a further theoretical and conceptual framework from which one can examine discourse. Associated with this theoretical framework is the work of Edward Said and his critique of Orientalism whereby in terms of media coverage, ‘it is the representations of Islam in the media that create issues in society, rather than many practices of Islamic faith and culture themselves’ (McGregor, 2013: 109). The argument whereby it is suggested the media help create and instil the notion of Other is supported by Rane and Hershi (2012: 138) who found that ‘post 9/11, the media frames used in the coverage of Islam and Muslims have been based on Orientalist depictions of a religion and people as a different, strange, inferior and threatening other’. Such a practice is evident through the work of MacDonald (2006: 16) who asserts that within the media, ‘in the search for marketability, the voice of the Other is frequently appropriated for dramatic effect’. Moreover, Saniotis (2005: 536) suggests that ‘Orientalist tropes are selectively played out in the representation of Muslims in media and public arenas, a process that has contributed significantly to “Islamophobia”’. Indeed, one can look at the issue of power with reference to the media frames used to depict both Islam and Muslims. As Said (1978) further asserts, those

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<sup>50</sup> Male, Community Leader; unstructured interview conducted at 10.30am on 2 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

reporters within the Western context, intentionally include suggestions of fear and terrorism in their reporting on Muslims and Islam as a ‘means of reinforcing the dominant discourses in society surrounding this religious group’ (Rane and Hershi, 2012; Aly, 2007; Dunn, 2001). Such statements are reiterated by Alsultany (2012: 7) who contends that ‘government and media discourses together form a hegemonic field of meaning’.

The discourse dominating Australian society with regard to Islam and implicitly Australian Muslims is the negative depiction of Islam and the interchanging of terms such as Islam, Muslim and terrorism. Moreover, there is widespread evidence to highlight the fact that Islam/Muslim is believed to be synonymous with terrorism or violent extremism. Moreover, media messages post 9/11 are inculcated with images and representations of torture and abuse both by and at the hands of Muslims (Gronnvoll, 2010; Yelle 2011). Unsurprisingly it has been the events of 9/11 which catapulted Islam and the Muslim population into the spotlight. This negative media coverage and representation as well as the widespread Islamophobia as a result of this coverage have further manifested the idea of Australian Muslims being “the Other”.

The above has examined the discourse surrounding media representation and coverage of Islam and consequently Australian Muslims. As previously stated, the portrayal of Muslims as “the Other” or as something to be fearful of, could be read as a means of reinforcing stereotypes, promoting political agendas or fostering a particular discourse. As Lean (2012) suggests, the fear of Muslims is manufactured by those in power in order to maintain the status-quo. It has been suggested that when in fear of losing national norms or fear they are threatened, that national values are pushed to the forefront, encouraged and promoted. Those regarded as the threat are identified as dangerous, different and incompatible. Moreover, Hafez (2000) seeks to highlight the relationship between the media and policy makers in that the media does not exist in a vacuum, but rather are inter-linked therefore resulting in an attitude favourable to government policies and practices. It has been suggested by Gleeson (2014) that the “threat” posed could be seen as a social construct in so far as the concept of security is also a social construct. Henceforth, a process of securitisation is evident.

## **Security: A Social Construct?**

Whilst few academic works question and critique the term security, this chapter will argue that the term is fluid and not fixed; that it is a social construct formed by those who hold power in a nation, i.e. governments and media. It cannot be denied that for the greatest part of the 21st century, the dominant discourse has been that of the “war on terror” and is the “hegemonic political discourse” whereby, ‘the public debate uses mainly the language, terms, ideas, and knowledge’ of the dominant discourse, and where ‘alternative words and meanings are rarely found and dissenting voices are almost never heard’ (Jackson, 2005: 331). Indeed, as suggested by Peteet (2005) and further substantiating the claims by Jackson (2005: 336), ‘words, rhetoric and discourses are more important than ever before, it is of crucial potency that we look to their role in the field of security studies’.

A framework approach emerged in the post-Cold War period seeking to challenge the power of political realism; that of critical security studies which ‘recognised the social construction of reality and security, and the absence of objective knowledge’ (Karampampas, 2009: 746). In an attempt to broaden and deepen the definition and conceptualisation of security, a conceptual tool was developed which has been associated with the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. This conceptual attempt has been described as ‘...perhaps the most significant conceptual development that has emerged specifically within the security studies’ (Collins, 2007: 60). Buzan and Weaver (2003: 25) contend that the

‘process of securitization is the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat’.

Such a point was communicated by respondents who felt that Muslims were being portrayed as a security threat themselves;

‘the way they talk about us, always negative – like we need to be contained – we are seen as a threat to national security’.<sup>52</sup>

As such, security is regarded as ‘a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists, but because the issue is presented as a threat’ (Buzan and Weaver, 1998: 25). Therefore, security in this light is seen as both socially and discursively constructed.<sup>53</sup> Essentially, security or securitisation can be termed a “speech act”. This securitisation process consists of three main entities; ‘referent object which is that which is seen to be existentially threatened and typically the state; the securitising actors who are those who declare a referent object existentially threatened, and the functional actors are those who influence decisions in the security field’ (Buzan et al, 1998: 35). Important to note here in terms of a referent object, is that it must be one which has a ‘legitimate claim to survival...and to which one can point and say it has to survive therefore it is necessary to...’ (Buzan et al, 1998: 36). According to Emmerson (2007: 111), securitisation can be identified as a two-stage process. The first stage of this process is the identification of the threat which occurs ‘when an issue is presented [through a speech act] as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object by a securitising actor’, and the second stage involves the convincing of the audience that the threat is “real” (Collins, 2007: 111). In addition, and interestingly in terms of the view that stating something is a security threat, the Copenhagen School also defines security as ‘the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics’ (Roe, 2008: 23). Such references were made in consultations with participants:

‘the government through the language they decide to use, they define what is seen as a security threat; everything in counter-terrorism is framed as needing special responses when one can ask if it really does’<sup>54</sup>.

Further demonstrating that security is above politics, the Copenhagen School contends that security itself ‘should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues of normal politics’

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<sup>52</sup> Female, 50, Community activist; unstructured interview conducted at 2pm on 4 February 2014 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

<sup>53</sup> References to this process are also made in the work of Afrary, J. and Robinson, K. 2005. *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seduction of Islamism*. Chicago: Chicago University Press concerning the writing of Foucault and his interpretation of how Islam and the East were portrayed in the West.

<sup>54</sup> Male, Community activist; unstructured interview conducted at 4pm on 29 October 2013 in Rosebery, Sydney; notes made during interview.



(Buzan and Weaver, 1998: 29). This further reinforces the concept of security as a social construct, that those in power securitise those issues it cannot deal with. Moreover, and as such, the way to study securitisation is to study discourse argues Buzan and Weaver (1998: 25).

### **Early Australian Security Discourse**

There are a number of themes evident in Australia's security discourse in terms of the rationales sought by John Howard, as means of justification for his counter-terror policies and practices. Themes evident are the focus on the national interest, fear of the other and the promotion of the dichotomy of "them" versus "us". Further themes include the linking of asylum seekers with terrorism thereby further creating "otherness" implicitly.

Before launching into an examination of current discourse, it may be useful to take into account the historical security discourse so as to identify a thread of continuation or a sense of diversion in contemporary security discourse. A number of scholars, notably Gleeson (2014), Burke (2001) and Stokes (1997) put forward the argument that a variety of elements evident in Australia's early security discourse are still evident today. Therefore, it can be said that this former discourse led the way for the structure of the current discourse.

Evident in Australian political discourse with particular reference to security discourse, are themes of violence and fear. Historically, violence was manifest in the killing of indigenous peoples who were regarded as posing the 'first existential threat to the survival of the colony' (Gleeson, 2014: 49). Moreover, Burke (2001: 216) contends that this culture of violence became manifest because of 'greed and a sense of civilisational superiority amongst the early white settlers'. The narratives of the cultural and political diaspora are suppressed through the reiteration of the notion of white Anglo-Celtic supremacy within Australia; a process which has also been witnessed elsewhere (Bhabha, 1994). In relation to this culture of violence as a means of 'making it' (Arendt, 1958), it has been posited that indeed the 'Australian nation has been shaped by fear' (cited in Burke, 2001: 218). Gleeson (2014: 52) goes on to divulge these fears: 'fear of the savage, fear of the landscape, fear of isolation, fear of invasion, fear of "the other"'. A politics of fear whereby a government 'controls' the truth for political gain thrives most profoundly in a climate 'when some existential threat to a society's security exists' (Gleeson, 2014: 52). Moreover, when two or more cultures meet and interact, Bhabha (1994) contends that a new challenge is manifest that questions the sense of historical identity of a culture as a homogenising, unifying force that is kept alive in the national traditions of the people. It is here

that a third space emerges where cultural identities are produced on boundaries in-between forms of difference, such as class and location. Indeed, fear can enable the maintenance of the status quo by resisting change and progression. Moreover, within the Australian context, it has been argued by the above scholars that Australian security discourse has promoted security and foreign policy at the cost of individual liberty and freedoms (Gleeson, 2014: 56). The sovereignty of the State is a more important issue needing protection than the rights of those who live in that State. Speaking of the Australian context, Philips (1983: 44) contends that when such a state was evident, the ‘foundations of democracy in Australia were seriously undermined and controversial policy decisions given a legitimacy which may not have been possible in a “normal” political climate’. Moreover, relating to this preservation of the state over the individual is the existence of what has been termed as a “politics of exclusion”. This politics was practised ‘as a means of achieving security, or at least alleviating insecurity’ (Gleeson, 2014: 64). As previously noted, Australia has been characterised by fear and insecurity surrounding difference, “the Other”, change; this background may shed some light as to why One Nation leader Pauline Hanson who prior to this was a member of the Liberal Party adopted a policy framework imitating this exclusionary background targeting those such as ‘Aboriginals, Asians, the intelligentsia, homosexuals, feminists, pornographers, “greens”, the United Nations and the ABC’ (Adams, 1998; Dale, 1997). The ABC is the state owned and funded Australian Broadcasting Corporation that questioned the ideas of Hanson. Indeed, it was those who subscribe to the former “groups” that insecurity was felt towards. This crystallises therefore, the entrenched conception that ‘difference constitutes danger, threat and fear’ (Gleeson, 2014: 65). Such a sentiment too was felt by participants, particularly with reference to language:

‘we are seen as outcasts because we are portrayed as being different – a different that is characterised by danger, violence, inferiority and ultimately threat. It is all words though and how they are used’.<sup>55</sup>

As noted, discourse, rhetoric and language are of pivotal importance when examining security studies. In line with this too, is the notion of political correctness (PC) – a questionable attribute in the Australian context. The idea and encouragement of political correctness suffered a backlash, argue Ahluwalia and McCarthy (1998). Indeed, Ahluwalia and McCarthy (1998: 79)

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<sup>55</sup> Female, community activist; focus group participant; focus group conducted from 1-2:30pm on 15 October 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during focus group session.

argue that since the beginning of the 1990s, the PC debate has been identified as a ‘reaction to the perceived gains of marginal groups such as Aboriginal people, feminists, the gay community and recent migrants’. As such, the PC issue appears to be a backlash against these groups and to a degree, acts as a vacuum through which to mask issues of ‘marginality and oppression within contemporary Australian society’ (Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 1998: 79). In terms of definition there is little consensus. Dunn (2010: 57) suggests that PC is part of a ‘long ideological and political struggle that goes back to the abolition of slavery and decolonisation and is connected to the rise of feminism, anti-racism and multiculturalism’. Within the Australian context, the PC debate is ‘inextricably linked to multiculturalism and immigration’ (Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 1998: 80). The source of this linking can be attributed most profoundly to Pauline Hanson. Hanson was of the opinion that others for too long hijacked debate and that “Australians” needed to take back the reigns; she was referring to how PC Australia had become. Illustrative of her concern were statements made in her 1996 maiden speech,

‘we now have a situation whereby a type of reverse racism is applied to mainstream Australians by those who promote political correctness and those who control the various taxpayer funded ‘industries’ that flourish in our society serving Aboriginals, multiculturalists and a host of other minority groups...I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished...I believe that we are in danger of being swamped by Asians...Abolishing the policy of multiculturalism will save billions of dollars’ (Hanson, 1996: 3802-2805).

Underpinning such sentiments in her maiden speech are concerns with minority groups, difference and possible potential change to the Australian way of life and the Australian identity. Essentially, Hanson is fearful of change to the composition of Australia as well as the Australian identity. Through the abolition of multiculturalism and the continued promotion of the assimilationist agenda; the status quo can be preserved. Moreover, and importantly are Hanson’s concerns with the arrival of Asians; through her use of rhetoric and choice of language, Hanson ‘makes a deliberate attempt to evoke the notion of a threat emanating from the very idea of difference’ (Ahluwalia and McCarthy: 1998: 81). This sentiment still has relevance in today’s Australia whereby difference constitutes threat and danger and something to be addressed. As previously noted, PC in Australia is regarded as concerning minority groups, or as Howard himself asserted, ‘PC is a strategic ploy used by minority fundamentalists

to intimidate all those Australians who still feel strong ties with Britain...and to criticise those who extol mainstream practices or values' (cited in Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 1998: 82). This failure to adopt PC within Australia is further illustrative of Hanson's and Howard's desire to maintain Australian identity and preserve the distribution of power between "Australians" and "Others". Moreover, Ahluwalia and McCarthy (1998) suggest that the PC controversy 'is a response to the changing Australian population and the gains that have been made through multiculturalism'. Indeed, this dissent towards PC could be characterised as a result 'of the changing nature of a world in which major political events, such as decolonisation, are challenging the primacy of Western beliefs' (Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 1998: 84) which Hanson and Howard hold in such high esteem. In order to protect the status and dominance of those Western beliefs and values, those seen as posing a threat or constituting potential change, are identified as other and as different and, therefore, as a threat. This again reiterates the preservation of the status quo. Respondents to this research raised their concern that Australia did not seem open to change:

'I feel like there is an unwillingness to welcome, to change, to evolve here, I feel as though they [Australia] wants everything to stay the same, to remain as it once was...their inflammatory language seeks to polarise society into camps against each other...'.<sup>56</sup>

It is precisely this preservation of the status quo which Australian security discourse seems concerned and aims to deal with, through the resistance of anything which may lead to change such as a policy of multiculturalism. The agenda behind such discourse is therefore apparent; that is to preserve a degree of public fear against change in order to defend existing policies.

Within this discourse of fear, "us" or the mainstream were characterised as good, ordinary non-aboriginal tax- paying Australian with associated linking signs of truth, English speaking, skilled. Non-mainstream or other were characterised as bad with inferences to aboriginal, ethnic, minority groups and linked to this category were characteristics of irrationality, non-English speaking, unskilled, corrupt, they and them. Returning to the PC debacle and the above polarisations made by Hanson, Howard continued to challenge the issue of PC stating, 'in recent times there has been a tendency towards excessive political correctness

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<sup>56</sup> Male, 19, Trade; unstructured interview conducted at 2pm on 16 October 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

in political debates in this country' (cited in Ahluwalia and McCarthy, 1998: 83). This remark implies disdain as well as a desire to forgo the quest for PC in Australia. Following Hanson's establishment of the One Nation Party in 1997, the issue of PC continued to remain at the fore,

'there is the chance for change...the chance to finally rid ourselves of the inequality that has grown from years from political correctness...The chance to stand against those who have betrayed our country, and would destroy our identity by forcing upon us the cultures of others...The chances to turn this country around...' (Hanson cited in Gleeson, 2014: 331).

Such terminology and discourse stresses a degree of rebellion from what has been, to that of a new restored Australia, that is rid of those causing problems in society and returning to Australia as it once was. The phrase 'inequality from years of political correctness' to a degree aims to delegitimise those who sought PC and to those whom it sought to include. Hanson sought to protect the Australians whose identity markers fitted into what she believed it meant to be "Australian". Importantly, although Hanson's political rise was brief, her political discourse and rhetoric would subsist through the narrative fostered and promoted by Howard. Such a narrative evolved to foster a sense of danger, fear and distrust against those whom Howard saw as potential threats to the national landscape of Australia.

### **Asylum Seeker = Middle Eastern = terrorist?**

'ever since the arrival of asylum seekers and then the fear mongering that went on surrounding them, there is this associating asylum seekers with coming from the Middle East and of course, anyone that comes from there is a terrorist'.<sup>57</sup>

Historically, the issue of immigration has been sore and contentious within Australia. It is of little surprise therefore that the 2001 Tampa issue involving asylum seekers became entrenched

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<sup>57</sup> Male, 29, Iraqi Migrant; unstructured interview conducted at 2pm on 23 October 2013 in Coogee, Sydney; notes made during interview.

in Australian political history. Tampa involved the refusal of a vessel, carrying 438 passengers, entry into Australian waters leaving it stranded in international waters off Christmas Island. The refusal of this vessel carrying asylum seekers renewed and yielded the interest in this issue in Australian political life. It has been argued that Howard's discursive construction of this Tampa issue and the wider issue of asylum seekers was the precursor and means of justification for what would become his counter-terror portfolio. Central to this discourse was an anti- asylum seeker tone which placed the issue of sovereignty at the core. Howard's conceptualisation of sovereignty, it has been argued, has been as the 'right to exclude which is reminiscent of Hanson's politics of exclusion' (Gelber and McDonald, 2006: 269). Howard's rhetoric that it was a sovereign right to control Australia's borders continued throughout the life of the asylum seekers issue. A number of narratives illustrate this. For instance, in a televised interview Howard remarked that, 'we cannot surrender our right as a sovereign country our right to control our borders...we appear to be losing control of the flow of people' as well as, 'enormous problem...unbelievable problem in trying to control our borders' (Howard cited in Gleeson, 2014: 332). From such statements, it appears that the threat posed to Australian sovereignty and borders is grave and that control needs to be taken back urgently in order to deal with this "enormous issue" of protecting Australia. As previously mentioned, this is a further process of securitisation whereby the government using the politics of fear and a process of interpellation, creates a threat. Within this anti- asylum seekers discourse, there came a further territorial argument or underlying cultural element; that of the national interest. Illustrative of this, Howard on the AM radio programme (2001) asserted that, 'we've taken this stance because we believe it is the right thing to do in our long term national interest', as well as adding: 'I've got to defend the national interest'. This national interest rhetoric and argument implies that asylum seekers do not require protection but rather, Australia's borders and protecting Australian national interests, is the main priority. A subjective expression the national interest 'functions as a rhetorical device that generates the legitimacy of and support for state action' (Weldes, 1999: 4). It must be noted, however, that the onus of legitimising state action lies with the people. For instance, Howard's move in invoking the national interest serves as a means through which to hail Australians into a particular subject position with whom his message resonates with, i.e. Australian borders need protected and it is a matter of national interest. Adding further impetus to Howard's discursive argument were another three events concerning the issue of asylum seekers; that of the children overboard affair whereby it was alleged children were thrown into the sea as an act of intimidation against the Australian government; the sinking SIEV X off south Java killing 353 asylum seekers and the death of two asylum seekers after

their boat was set on fire (Gleeson, 2014: 86). The “Children overboard” affair was particularly opportunistic for Howard to sharpen his anti- asylum seekers rhetoric and construction of the asylum seeker. Gleeson (2014: 87) argues this is so because of Howard’s ‘enthusiasm with which he denigrated the supposed perpetrators in the absence of concrete evidence’ as well as his ‘failure to renege when it was became apparent that the allegations were false’. In doing so, Howard continued to ‘further Otherise the asylum seeker and legitimate the government’s policy of exclusion’ (Gleeson, 2014: 87). Illustrative of this, is Howard’s remark, ‘It doesn’t speak volumes for some of the people on the vessel – suggestions that children were thrown overboard. That is a sorry reflection on their attitude of mind...we are a humane nation’ (Howard, 2001: doorstep interview).

Essentially, underpinning this anti- asylum seekers discourse is the issue of identity (Gleeson, 2014: 80). The promotion and preservation of the Australian identity of primarily Anglo heritage underpins this anti-asylum seekers discourse through the resistance to multiculturalism and the promotion of an assimilationist agenda. Stokes (1997: 8-12) reiterates this point arguing that, ‘states rely upon the construction of threat, and in turn others, to bolster the constructed identity of the state itself and legitimise the policies created to purportedly protect and preserve that identity’. Indeed, Murdoch insists that individuals inevitably express and communicate our moral beliefs in our use of language (cited in Scott-Baumann, 2012: 79). This is evident in the language adopted by Howard whose moral convictions were the undertone of his anti-multiculturalist and counter-terrorism portfolio. Van Dijk (1993) agrees with the above and suggests that discourse becomes a tool of the powerful following a process that involves the use of discriminatory language against minority groups that serves to influence public opinion regarding minorities and ultimately, culminates in the implementation of discriminatory practices.<sup>58</sup>

Whilst it is extremely important to acknowledge and address what was said, it is equally important to identify when particular discourses became more prominent and stronger arguments made. In the period from the Tampa incident to the events of 9/11- the focus was on setting out the discursive framework in terms of what the discourse was about (Gleeson, 2014: 85). Phase two, argues Gleeson (2014: 85), saw the establishment of this discourse which was characterised by ‘a discursive focus on blurring the boundaries between the issues of

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<sup>58</sup> The work by Van Dijk (1993: 121) reiterates the securitisation argument within this thesis that the perceived threat posed by radical Islam was a process of securitisation.

asylum-seekers and terrorism so as to construct the mega-issue of border protection'. Further within this discourse, it becomes apparent that asylum seekers are not only those who are regarded as other and subsequently identified and constructed as a threat. Howard, through his anti- asylum seeker discourse, developed categories of "the Other"; that of domestic "Other" such as Australian critics and those defined as foreign "Others". Essentially, it was through Howard's use of such terms and categorisations that the wider public were influenced in forming their own thoughts and attitudes towards Muslims. This is reminiscent of Said's (1997) discussions on media representations of Islam in terms of their negative connotations and depictions. It is this category of foreign "Others" with which Howard's discourse was most concerned and focused. Foreign "Others" ranged from radical "Other", asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, people smugglers, the U.N., Indonesia as well as genuine refugees. What is striking about this category is that those categorised within, generally have different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds from those whom Howard typically decries as "Australian". Moreover, as posited by Gleeson (2014: 86) and Marr (2007) is Howard's failure to distinguish the two identities – asylum seeker from terrorist- but to rather frame the threat in vague terms as people unwelcome in Australia, rather than explicitly stating one or another. In doing so, Howard synonymises the two identities 'in order to add greater legitimacy to his border protection policy' (Gleeson, 2014: 86).

Indeed, Howard's motive behind such moves and failure to distinguish further highlights his strive to further alienate "the Other" and in so doing, further polarise them versus us as well as stress the good versus the bad, or the legal versus the illegal. Instances such as these have also been noted in the British context the finger firmly pointed at Muslims for epitomising the incivilities that occur within society (Petley and Richardson, 2011). Indeed, the political rise of Howard in this period shows that his discourse was well received and resonated with a substantial portion of the Australian public, particularly those racially prejudiced. As a consequence of this, Gleeson (2014: 90) contends that Hage's (1998) term 'fantasies of white supremacy' is still relevant as these sentiments still linger in Australia. Given Howard's rhetoric and discourse, it is unsurprising that ideas of white supremacy become more prominent given that white Australians are portrayed as legitimate citizens contrasted to those who are illegitimate and typically perceived as non-white.

Those identified as unwelcome to Australia by Howard have been identified as asylum seekers who are perceived to typically come from Middle Eastern or Muslim majority countries



and who have implicitly, though a process of non-distinguishing, been labelled as terrorists. Gleeson (2014: 120) agrees with this assertion as she suggests that ‘although the asylum seeker was rarely referred to as explicitly Middle Eastern in Howard’s language, it was constructed as such by a process of linking’. Before going further into this argument, it may be important to note that whilst a number of scholars contend that an anti-Islamic discourse emerged following 9/11; this was implicitly rather than explicitly achieved. Whilst some instances can be described as blatant, the majority are implicit. Howard’s AM radio interview of August 2001 highlights how through a process of linking between asylum seekers and terrorists, Muslims and those of Middle Eastern heritage are the target:

‘...these people are coming in through Indonesia. It is easy to get into Indonesia, many of them are coming through Malaysia, many of them fly from Afghanistan and the Middle East to South East Asia, they have easy entry into a country like Malaysia because there’s an unrestricted right of entry I understand from Islamic countries to Malaysia’ (Howard, August, 2001 radio interview, AM Programme cited in Gleeson, 2014: 90).

As a result of Howard’s failure to distinguish the asylum seeker identity from the terrorist identity as well as statements such as the above, those coming from the Middle East are implicitly identified as a threat. This is a further example of the process of securitisation. Furthermore, and again reiterating the issue of identity and promoting ‘them versus us with us being good and them being the bad, radical “Others”, with reference to 9/11 and Bin Laden, Howard states,

‘Bin Laden’s hatred for the United States, and for a world system built on individual freedom, religious tolerance, democracy, and the intentional free flow of commerce, is non- negotiable. The virtues of the modern world are affront to Bin Laden’ (Howard cited in Gleeson, 2014: 103).

Statements as above further promote positive attributes to the Self and strive to recruit the audience member into the “good” community whilst simultaneously portraying the enemy. This enemy is the radical other, whom according to Howard’s discourse is ‘already or almost here’ (Gleeson, 2014: 107). For instance, Howard in 2001 states ‘...border surveillance and border protection and greater scrutiny of who comes to this country is clearly one of the things we have

to do as a consequence of what's occurred [meaning 9/11]' (Howard cited in Gleeson, 2014: 107).

Following the 2002 Bali bombings, the terrorist identity and discourse was still evident but within this discourse, an increasing focus was placed on the enemy within – that of an “Australian” who could be essentially disloyal. According to Gleeson (2014: 120), ‘a great deal of energy on Howard’s part went into constructing the identity of the potentially evil Muslim’. Underpinning this message was the potential for Muslims to be disloyal to Australia, as Howard stated,

‘...this is not targeting Islam in general. There are several hundred thousand Australians of Muslim faith and they are part of our community, they should be respected. And in return, they should continue, as they have in the past, to behave as part of our community as well’ (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 120).

As well as,

‘...people coming to this country whether they’re Islamics [sic] must be, must understand that when they come to Australia they make a decision to accept, they can’t cherry pick the Australian way of life’ (Howard cited in Gleeson, 2014: 120).

Here again, the dichotomy of them versus us is evident with terms such as “they”, “us”, “our community”; such terms imply difference. The statement insisting acceptance of the Australian way of life seems to apply to Muslims only as they are explicitly referred to in Howard’s rhetoric. At a deeper and more implicit level and in terms of the wider discourse, this negative representation of the possibly “evil Muslim” has twofold functions. Firstly, this representation offers a level of legitimisation of tighter and more contentious counter-terror policy and secondly, this discourse offers a degree of justification against the counter-terror policies aimed predominantly at the Muslim population.

**“Let’s look out for *Australia*”**

‘the let’s look out for Australia campaign was exactly that, seeking to look out for Australia – those who were seen as “Australian”, we [Muslims], we were not included in that – we are the ones Australia is protected against- we are Australian but we don’t matter because we are different’. <sup>59</sup>

Two and a half months following the Bali bombings at a time when Bali was fresh in people’s minds, the Australian government’s quest for total protection and security saw the launch of a National Security Public Information Campaign. “Let’s look out for Australia”, was the title of phase one of this campaign to raise public awareness and watchfulness. For Howard, ‘this campaign is necessary, given the new security circumstances in which we have found ourselves, particularly as a result of the 11th of September and the 12th of October’ (Howard, December 2002 Press Conference cited in Gleeson, 2014: 122).

Within this “Let’s look out for Australia” campaign, a particular route of thought was promoted alongside a discourse whose aim was to further bolster Howard’s War on Terror campaign. This campaign was formed on the basis of characteristics pertinent in Australia such as identity and realism in that the ‘world outside Australia’s borders is viewed as anarchic and dangerous’ and poses a dangerous and serious threat to Australia itself which was a focus on threat (Gleeson, 2014: 96). Gleeson (2014) and Younane (2006) both contend that a great focus and emphasis was placed on the issue and construction of identity within the “Let’s look out for Australia” campaign. Younane (2006: 411) further suggests that this counter-terror measure through public awareness propositioned a particular notion of the Self in order to further this counter-terror campaign. As stated, ‘the campaign propositioned a very specific definition of the national Self in order to reassure citizens who felt threatened by terrorism, and also to encourage them to support the government’s counter-terrorism agenda’. Moreover, within this “Let’s look out for Australia” discourse was another element closely tied to the campaigns subheading. As Gleeson (2014: 123) asserts ‘what was quite a detailed depiction of identity was tied neatly to the campaign’s subheading, “protecting our way of life from a possible terrorist threat”’. This phrase “way of life” or more specifically “the Australian way of life” is a common, popular phrase within Australia which denotes a sense of “we live a particular way and when you come here you are to adhere to it”. Indeed, the phrase “the Australian way of

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<sup>59</sup> Female, 18, Community member; unstructured interview conducted 2 February 2014 at 1pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

life” has historical significance as it was coined in the 1950s with reference to Australia’s non-white immigration and in a defensive response to the perceived changes to the composition of the Australian population. Moreover, underlying this phrase was the desire that those who immigrate to Australia are to adhere to Australian values and culture; they are to assimilate to “the Australian way of life”. Gleeson (2014) suggests that one can go further as to suggest that deeper sentiments underpin such a phrase. Markus (2001: 15) too underscores this thought contending that the use of “the Australian way of life” ‘reinforces the perceived superiority of Anglo-Australian institutions and values and the concomitant need for these to remain unchanged’. “The Australian way of life” is utilised therefore as a means of maintaining the status-quo as well as promoting and preserving the Australian identity. The phraseology utilised in this campaign was referred to in discussions with participants,

‘using the “Australian way of life”- because immigrants to this country are expected to succumb to the ways of Australia, by using this phrase in that we must protect this way of life – those who are not seen as living the “Australian” way could be seen as the threat to danger to this way’.<sup>60</sup>

Gleeson (2014: 125) puts forward the argument that “the Australian way of life” served to ‘interpolate citizens into a discourse of exclusion and fear based on a vague notion of national Selfhood, and on the basis that the Self was existentially threatened’.

The imagery of this “Let’s look out for Australia” campaign sought to resonate with “Australians”- that is those who conform to “the Australian way of life”. This imagery consisted of stereotypical Australian symbols and activities such as the beach and barbeques in the back yard, the Australian flag on the beach and an Anglo-Australian family playing cricket. An image of a female Anglo-Australian beside a female police officer stresses solidarity and a mutual respect and understanding for protecting each other. A happy multi-ethnic classroom portrays a welcoming, all-inclusive nature and importantly, racial tolerance. Essentially, the wording and imagery of this pamphlet seek to construct an ordinary, good Self that must protect from a different, dangerous other. Whilst asking Australians to look out for Australia and report any suspicious behaviour without stating what could be defined as suspicious behaviour, it is by virtue of this lack of definition that those who should be regarded with suspicion are those

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<sup>60</sup> Male, Community leader; unstructured interview conducted at 4pm on 13 September 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

who are simply not the Self (Gleeson, 2014: 127). Essentially, according to Gleeson (2014: 127), ‘the guide for identifying the Other is the extent of a person’s adherence to “the Australian way of life”’. Indeed, it is only natural that one’s own pre-existing stereotypes are drawn upon and utilised to form the basis on which suspicious behaviour is defined and identified. Despite the failure to explicitly state who or what should be regarded with suspicion, the discourse of the Australian government as well as the media rhetoric mean that those of Middle Eastern appearance are regarded with suspicion and identified as a threat. This ties in with the broader war on terror campaign and counter-terror discourse which is tied to the terrorist/Muslim Other. It is here again, we see the securitisation of Islam taking place through the use of language and imagery. Highlighting the focus on the Muslim population within as well as a result of this campaign, is the finding by Packham (2014) which showed that of those calls made to authorities regarding suspicious behaviour, the vast majority were made about those of Muslim faith. Participants too remarked this campaign with a general consensus surmised in the following response that it served as an implicit reference to Muslims and served to substantiate the anti-Muslim and migrant discourse,

‘the let’s look out for Australia campaign whilst not explicitly targeting us as Muslims...when used in with the anti-Muslim discourse serves as a potent instigator for the suspect community to be placed as Muslim, yet again’.<sup>61</sup>

### **Cronulla: Cause or effect of Securitisation?**

Moving forward to the events which resulted in the infamous Cronulla Riots of December 2005, it has been suggested by Gleeson (2014: 87) that it would be unsurprising if those engaged in the riots were so because ‘they felt threatened by the unusual or different behaviour of the Lebanese Australians?’ Lattas (2007) agrees with Gleeson (2014), suggesting that the perceived differences between the Anglo-Australian and the Lebanese Australian was central to the mind-set of the rioters. Furthermore, Lattas (2007: 302) opines that the different or unusual behaviour at the Cronulla riots further cemented the standing of the Arab/Muslim Other as a fundamentally ‘disordered subjectivity that had no place in Australia’. Prior to these events however and acting as a further catalyst for poor relations were Howard’s remarks regarding immigration and the Muslim population. For instance, Howard in the November 2005

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<sup>61</sup> Male, Community member; semi-structured interview conducted at 5pm in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

radio interview stated that, ‘immigration and cultural diversity has become such a normal thing in Australia that we have never really imagined that people who’d grown up in Australia or who had embraced Australia as their country would want to engage in such terrorist acts’ (Howard cited in Gleeson, 2014: 86). Howard (2005) followed that statement with this remark, ‘there’s no doubt, that (the majority of terrorists are Muslim) is true, the common thread of the contemporary terrorist threat is perverted, fanatical Islam’ (Howard cited in Gleeson, 2014: 90).

Remarks such as those above foster and cement the idea of difference being dangerous and something to be suspicious of. The use of such rhetoric inflames tense community relations which, in this case, became manifest with the Cronulla riots. Moreover, such discourse justified to a degree that Muslims are dangerous and the events at Cronulla were a means through which “Australians” could protect themselves and their identity. Acting as a further catalyst and further promoting his covert anti-Muslim discourse, was Howard implicitly blaming the Muslim contingent of the Australian population for his country’s woes,

‘There is a small section of the Islamic population in Australia that because of its remarks about jihad, remarks which indicate an extremist view, that is a problem...it is not a problem that we have ever faced other immigrant communities who become easily absorbed into the Australian mainstream’ (cited in Gleeson, 2014: 111).

Through this remark, Howard suggests that extremism is a Muslim or Islamic phenomenon as ‘it is not a problem ever faced before with other immigrant communities’ (Gleeson, 2014: 111). Aware of the process of linking at the hands of the government, participants were concerned they were being used as a means to justify government policies and practices, particularly those concerning asylum seekers,

‘we are being used as justification for government policies, they are implying that all asylum seekers are Muslims and that Muslims are extremists and therefore their policies are targeting us, Muslims, when we are not the ones causing the issues and creating problems...we are being used as scapegoats’. <sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Female, community member; unstructured interview conducted at 6pm on 5 January 2014 in Sydney, CBD; notes made during interview.

Furthermore,

‘my friend and I got shouted at the other day at the train station, we were told to go home to where we came even though we were born here and are Australian...they said “Australia doesn’t need any more boat people from the Middle East causing havoc and interrupting our way of life” ...they have got this perception from Howard and the government and the way they talk about us’. <sup>63</sup>

These remarks highlight the impact government rhetoric is having on how it is perceived by the Muslims but also stresses the degree of support for the discourse adopted. Indeed, the majority of Muslim participants in this research, noted how the perceived threat posed by Islamic extremism was articulated.

Moreover, other participants viewed the discourse adopted by the government in terms of the threat posed by Islamic extremism as exaggerated,

‘the magnitude of the threat posed to Australia is nowhere near as severe or as strong as they [the Australian government] make out...through the language used it sounds like an attack is imminent that is going to wipe out Australia...their language needs to be toned down’. <sup>64</sup>

Further concern was expressed through this participant’s suggestion,

‘the government here in Australia, use language to the best of their advantage, they always try and use language that will instil fear...instil the emotion they want the people to feel...be it anger, fear, joy...they are very good at creating an atmosphere whereby we are always the perpetrator and never the victim...it is all through their language’. <sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Male, 33, Student; unstructured interview conducted at 3.30pm on 6 October 2013 in Bondi, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>65</sup> Male, community activist: unstructured interview conducted at 7pm on 21 December 2013 in Coogee, Sydney; notes made during interview.

With reference to the threat posed, one participant stressed their concern that the government deliberately exaggerated the threat posed through their language and rhetoric so as to make their policy and practice responses seem just and proportionate,

‘the way the government speaks about the threat facing Australia from radical Islam isn’t real...their counter-terror policies and this countering violent extremism grant scheme are simply measures brought in to address a perceived threat that is blown away out of proportion...but they have to blow the threat out of proportion to make these measures seem needed’. <sup>66</sup>

From the data gathered, it is evident that the language and discursive framework adopted by the Australian government is regarded as racist by respondents of this research. Concerns were raised as to the motives behind such language and rhetoric in terms of justifying threat. The majority of participants felt such discourse was adopted to infer a threat and subsequently act as a justification for the introduction of counter-terror measures. Participants too were aware that there were some within political and media arenas that were becoming disillusioned with Howard with wavering support for his security policies.

This participant was keen to illustrate their support for those who dissent from the “norm”, stating,

‘I know a few within those of power are becoming disgruntled with the government discourse and justifications for these counter-terror measures – it is probably difficult for them to go against their leader – I hope he can make a stand’. <sup>67</sup>

The justifications sought by the majority of those in power, were not supported by all. The support that existed for Howard and his discourse was strong with those in support vocal in their endeavour to promote his discourse and narrative. There were those, however, both in the political arena as well as within the media outlets who were unsupportive for Howard’s discursive message and opposed it.

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<sup>66</sup> Female, community activist; unstructured interview conducted at 3pm on 18 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>67</sup> Male, CVE participant; unstructured interview conducted at 4.30pm on 21 January 2014 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.



## **Dissent**

From Howard's inception, questions have been posed regarding the exact nature and level of threat posed by radical Islamists to Australia and its interests. Whilst there was support for Howard's discourse and policies, there was a degree of dissent, which is evident from the beginning of Howard's counter-terror campaign. In the aftermath of the Bali bombings, dissent came from academics and foreign policy commentators. Such criticisms stressed the negative impact the war on terror could have on regional relationships (Kitney, 2002). Howard, however, was always ready to respond to criticism or the questioning of his actions by side-lining his critics and by insinuating they held 'a lack of concern about Australian security and Australians generally' (McDonald, 2005: 312). This too was a means of defence and marginalisation in facing criticism of the "Let's look out for Australia" campaign. Perhaps the most prominent voice of dissent came from that of the Brisbane Lord Mayor Jim Soorley who questioned the justification for such counter-terror measures posing, 'the terror possibilities in this country are very remote. We have not had a terrorist attack in Australia. So why, why this anxiety and fear? This is propaganda. John Howard as the Gobbles of Australia' (Hall, 2003: 443).

Gleeson (2014) notes that the calling on Australians to send back these "Let's look out for Australia" campaign packs highlights that those who resisted this move by the Australian government were mobilised by inconsistencies in government rhetoric and discourse. One such inconsistency is the repetitive claims as to the need to eradicate the threat of terrorism but the failure to upgrade airport security which could be a potentially strong move in the fight against terrorism. Indeed, contradictions such as these according to Gleeson (2014: 143) 'lead to the government being labelled "opportunistic", exploiting the risk of terrorism for their own political gain'. Indeed, it is within the government's very own rhetorical framework and discourse that dissent and opportunity for criticism arose. Throughout the promotion and implementation of all of Howard's and the Australian government's counter-terror measures, there were those who saw cracks in their arguments and justifications and, by a means of dissent, slowly began to highlight the nature of the Australian counter-terror policy. Each move of dissent arose at pivotal discursive points throughout the war on terror narrative. In relation to Bali; dissent posed the question that military intervention could prove counter-productive and incite terrorism rather than refute it. Those against the invasion of Iraq were concerned with the Australian U.S. allegiance. In addition, opponents of the Anti- Terror Bill stressed how individual civil freedoms can be taken away whilst those who condemned the Cronulla riots

argued that the roots of violence were deeper and more complex than anti-social behaviour and substance abuse (Gleeson, 2014: 223). As well as this, Gleeson (2014: 224) notes that those advocates for detainees 'exposed the willingness of a government to sacrifice the individual for political gain'. Support for the Muslim communities is further evident in recent times following the Siege in Sydney whereby a twitter hash tag was set up "I'll ride with you" to show solidarity and support with Muslims in light of the attack. (ABC, 2015). A mock video showing racism and hostility towards Muslims in Australia showed how non-Muslims condemned those who were harassing Muslims and stood up for them with remarks such as 'you can't say they are all the same because they are not', 'they have every right to be here also, they make up Australia too, this is their country too'. Remarks such as these highlight dissent within society towards Howard and his implicit anti-Muslim stance.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has been concerned with the discursive securitisation of Muslims in Australia. It has sought to highlight how the Muslim population in Australia are securitised by the Australian government and to a degree the Australian media through the use of language and rhetoric. In order to uncover the meaning behind such discourse, Foucault's (1972) reading was employed so as to offer the most complete basis to understand discourse. Through this understanding of discourse, an examination of the discursive security framework adopted by the Australian government under Howard was undertaken to unearth their agenda. In order to do so, an examination was carried out into the historical discursive framework adopted by Australia which highlighted a number of themes such as fear, violence, realism and statism as characteristic of security discourse in the Australian context. Dominant securitising actors such as Hanson and Howard were pivotal in maintaining these characteristics in modern Australian discourse. Their discourse in particular, which has contextualised Australian counter-terror measures and countering violent extremism policies for contemporary Australia, was fashioned around specific, historically significant and meaningful notions of risk, threat and identity. Indeed, Australia's deep cultural grammar is evident throughout the discursive security framework which can be seen somewhat as a tactical movement in developing a sense of familiarity with the public so that government policies are seen as "common sense". A significant component of the discursive securitisation of Muslims within Australia is that it was characterised predominantly by one individual; Howard himself.

Howard and his supporters utilised language that was characterised by a number of themes; the dominant one of which was threat. Threat was referred to through various discourses such as with reference to sovereignty, military intervention, asylum seekers, and the issue of PC. This existential threat that was posed to Australia and its interests according to Howard and the Australian government came from the opposite to us; them. A dichotomy was established and promoted whereby the self, that is us were characterised as good, genuine, Australian, mainstream, legal and “the Other” was epitomised by them, radical, dangerous, different, incompatible, Middle Eastern, illegal, minority and increasing in number. These identity markers were the foundations on which statements were made and government policies justified; we need to protect against them. Both implicitly and explicitly, references were made and linkages drawn between negative or unfavourable characteristics and Muslims. A strong draw on Orientalist discourse was utilised in the Australian security discourse which painted Muslims as different and as “the Other” with whom it is advisable to have little consultation with because of their radical manner.

Counter-terror policies and countering violent extremism strategies were developed to promote and preserve the status-quo; that is to maintain the Australian way of life and defend the Australian identity. Those seen as posing a threat to the status-quo therefore were identified as an existential threat and a security issue. Muslims were constructed as posing this threat, as diluting the Australian identity and upsetting the power balance between Australians and “Others”. Australia’s growing counter-terrorism portfolio evolved in order to prevent change and significantly, to justify such a discursive framework and linguistic choice.

There were those however, who were unsupportive of the discursive securitisation of the Muslim population within Australia and who sought to dilute and prevent such rhetoric. Howard did not take kindly however and those who criticised were met with questions as to their motives in terms of sympathising with terrorists and not being loyal to their country. Gleeson (2014: 227) suggests that through the marginalisation of criticism, Howard’s discourse became more dominant. Invoking the national interest, issues of sovereignty and national security allowed the issue to become more than politics and therefore it was crucial to the security of the state and its people. The impact of such a discourse on the Muslim population has been profoundly negative. The creation of a suspect community, increased instances of racist behaviour, attitudes and attacks as well as the stereotyping of Muslims as different and as “the Other” stem from the discursive securitisation of the Muslim population by the

Australian government. Participants felt they were being used as a scapegoat through which the Australian government could implement and justify such counter-terror measures.

Through language and discourse Howard was able to put across the message and the agenda he sought. Howard was able to construct the issues of security so as to foster and promote an agenda and policy framework whereby PC was not adhered to and the dichotomy between us and them polarising the Muslim population could be maintained. Essentially, Howard was striving for a return to the White Australia policy era whereby those of Anglo-Celtic heritage were seen as typically Australian and all others who sought to come to Australian shores were to adhere to and embrace Australian culture, norms and values. Therefore, this chapter argues that both the concept and the practice of security in the Australian context are socially constructed. Through the use of language and a polarising discursive framework with Orientalist undertones, there is a discursive securitisation of Muslims in the Australian context. Underpinning this is a desire to return to a policy of assimilation and preserve the Anglo identity of Australia. It is within such a context, that Australia's counter-terrorism portfolio emerged and evolved. The implicit anti-Muslim undertones of Howard and the Australian government and their securitisation of Islam in Muslim political discourse saw Australia's counter-terror portfolio emerge with such undertones. As well as this, the choice and utilisation of such language and discourse, not only sought to strengthen Howard's anti-multicultural stance but also cause Muslims to re-think their position in terms of their visible identity markers.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Countering Violent Extremism and the Creation of a Suspect Community**

#### **Introduction**

In the period since 9/11, a discourse has evolved stressing the emergence of what has been termed a “new terrorism” that is religiously motivated. A significant consequence of such discourse has been the global stigmatising of Muslim communities as suspect, dangerous and ripe for radicalisation. Within Australia however, Muslims historically have been considered the Other because of their differing ethnic, linguistic and cultural traits. Whilst often used interchangeably, the concepts racism and Islamophobia will be unpicked within this chapter so as to uncover their relationship. The key players in the promotion of such a negative, stereotyping, othering discourse have been identified as both the Australian government, with particular reference to Howard as illustrated in the previous chapter and the Australian media. As a source of knowledge for many, the government and in particular the media, have a role to play in the formation of societal attitudes and opinions. Moreover, counter-terror and counter-radicalisation measures seem to reiterate this sentiment with their disproportionate targeting of particular sections of the Australian population; that is the Muslim contingent. The above together, fostering a negative undertone and discourse can cause everyday hardship and difficulties for the Muslim population. The effect of such negative stereotyping not only creates and maintains a suspect community but also has wider implications for community relations and tensions, social cohesion, social solidarity and multiculturalism. This chapter will thus seek to unearth and highlight the effect and impact of stereotyping a sample of the Muslim population residing in Sydney as a suspect community by those in power such as the government and media outlets.

#### **Who are Suspect Communities?**

The notion and concept of ‘suspect community’ can be traced back to the work of Paddy Hillyard on the Irish during “The Troubles” (1968-1998) and their stigmatising as suspect. Hillyard’s 1993 work focused on the secret state and the effects of the Prevention of Terrorist Act (1974) on those whom it was seeking to control; that is those it regarded as suspect; the Irish. Hillyard (1993) offers a conceptualisation of suspect community which he denotes as

‘the process of identification of a threat and of a sign of abnormality which exemplified and legitimated politics of exception put in place by the state’ (201). Furthermore, related to the creation of a suspect community is discourse as continuously mentioned throughout this thesis. Hillyard (1993) contends that ‘discourses of suspicion proceed along a logic of association, identifying as security threats markers of identity and behaviours that are specific to particular social groups which could potentially become “suspect communities”’. While Hillyard (1993) was mainly concerned about the creation of a suspect community through the introduction of counter-terror laws, according to Cherney and Murphy (2015: 2), ‘the term has more recently been used to also capture the outcome of the cultural, political and ideological discourses that combine to define and consolidate Muslims as the “enemy within”’.

Moreover, central to this concept of suspect community is the term “community” in itself. Community as a concept is one of much contestation as it suggests a degree of cohesion, solidarity, unity, harmony and good relations. In reality, however, “community” is an umbrella term utilised to include particular populations identified via various markers, for instance religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation. Hickman et al (2012) suggest that the very term community has evolved and developed in recent times and has evolved to include new markers of “communitiness”. This evolution argues Hickman et al (2012) ‘now embraces both a dominant notion of sociation in that we are all defined as members of communities based on places, relationships and identities, and acts as a catch-all term for writing about problematized populations’. Indeed, in this instance, the term community is used to refer to those whom are perceived as different and as posing a threat. Furthermore, with particular reference to the Muslim population, the term community is used to refer to the Muslim population as a whole, as if it were a homogenous group thus failing to recognise and take into account the different and opposing sects within Islam as well as the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Muslim migrant communities, and therefore the many Muslim communities. This portrayal of Muslims within the metropolis of Sydney is also evident within the model created for use in community engagement created with concentric circles with terrorists in the middle failing to recognise the complexities within communities. This generalisation stereotypes all Muslims, thus resulting in a suspect community that is inclusive of all Muslims.

This generalising tendency about a particular population using the term community has historical basis when looking at terrorism and violent extremism. Although speaking with regard to the Irish community during the period of ‘The Troubles’ in Northern Ireland, many

such as Hillyard observe similarities with Muslims in this post-9/11 era in terms of their stigmatisation and essentially their securitisation as a suspect community. Such similarities are those posed by both groups, although in different time periods, as being ‘irrational and fanatical’ (Hickman et al, 2012). Moreover, the countermeasures adopted and utilised in recent times within Britain, stem from those implemented during the time of IRA violence. Indeed, the counter-terror measures adopted within the Australian context are mirrored on those of Britain despite the differing contexts in terms of threat level posed by radical Islam. Although referring to Britain and the IRA Hickman et al (2012) comment that ‘the media coverages speculation on the identities and nature of people who would carry out bombings’ is also relevant in the Australian context. Participants of my own research raised concern at the seemingly autonomous stereotyping of Muslim communities with negative media reporting such as rapes and terrorism.

Indeed, within this latter similarity, there has emerged a new dimension; that is that of the home-grown element. Significantly, the experiences of counter-measures for the Irish have been reiterated, in terms of stop and search experiences and airport security treatment. Within the Australian context, as well as other contexts namely Britain, both Irish communities and Muslim communities are immigrant populations within these two countries. As such, immigrant minority populations are prime targets for racist vilification and “othering” due to their perceived differences. Such racist attitudes as well as overseas events such as the activities of the IRA in Britain and that of 9/11 on a global scale; not only in Australia, but worldwide more generally, have fostered the translation of these racist sentiments into that of suspicion, resulting in the maintenance of suspect communities.

### **How have Muslims become “suspect?”**

Australia’s history as a settler colony within the British Commonwealth continues to protrude to the fore of its identity, for instance the flag, its focus on Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter as well as the continuous reiteration of its British heritage stress a degree of superiority of British identity markers over others. Whilst this is expected to a degree because of settler colonial history, participants felt there was a need to recognise the global migrant influence on Australia rather than focus solely on its British influence. Indeed, it was strongly felt by participants that there is little attention given to the contribution of Muslims to the evolution of Australia as a nation state. For instance, the arrival and influence of Afghan

cameleers is scarcely mentioned when talking about the origins of Australia. As previously alluded to, the White Australia period (1901-1973) was characterised by the refusal of entry into Australia those who were not regarded as characterising “Australian-ness”; that is whiteness, or an Anglo-Celtic heritage. It was due to labour shortage that “others” such as Muslims and those from Eastern Europe were permitted migrant status. Fear that the Australian “way of life” would be diluted was a great fear of Australian governments at that time.

Whilst the period of White Australia was officially abolished in 1973 and a policy of multiculturalism was undertaken, the sentiments of White Australia remained in the mind-set of many. The discursive construction of the immigrant was laden with sentiments of fear, angst, and anxiousness and linked with terms such as difference, other, immigrant, illegal and terrorist. In the wake of 9/11, this discursive construction of the suspect community would become more potent and transparent as illustrated in previous chapters discussing the anti-Muslim discourse prevalent within Australia. Furedi (2005: vii) in his work stresses the significance of fear in this post 9/11 world stating the most significant challenge to social wellbeing and policy formation as ‘likely to be fear’.

Moreover, Furedi (2005: vii) predicted that in contemporary Western society in particular, this fear will be constituted and characterised by the ‘belief that humanity is confronted by powerful destructive forces that threaten our everyday existence’. The anti-multiculturalism discourse utilised by Howard serves to illustrate this assertion as examined in previous chapters. Indeed, it is this very fear which allows the ability to speculate and exaggerate without question. With reference to the linking of asylum-seekers to terrorism is the suggestion by Furedi (2005: vii) that ‘in contemporary times, fear migrates freely from one problem to the next without there being a necessity for causal or logical connection’. Furthermore, and significantly, Furedi (2005: vii) stresses the connection between feelings of fear and a sense of vulnerability as he contends ‘the cumulative impact of the politics of fear is to reinforce society's consciousness of vulnerability. And the more powerless we feel the more we are likely to find it difficult to resist the siren's call of fear’. This further reiterates the discursive framework adopted by Howard in that he manifested a climate of fear surrounding Muslim communities where “Australians” were portrayed as vulnerable and potential victims to Muslims.



As already alluded to within this thesis, the preservation of the status quo and the prevention of change or adaption were constant in the mentality and mind-set of the Howard government. Those threatening this therefore were branded as ‘unwanted’ and ‘different, dangerous’, thus constructing a narrative and disposition of fear and suspicion around such communities. Indeed, these communities would be minorities Muslims. This then fed into the anti-Islamic discourse linking acts of terrorism, to add impetus and fear to the very mention of Muslims, Islam or Middle East. Pursuing and stressing this anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim tone without doubt, is the media. Constructing a narrative and fear regarding a particular section of the Australian population over others, began as racism subsequently emerging as Islamophobia and culminating as the production of a suspect community.

### **Racism V Islamophobia**

The sense and practice of the concept of suspect community can be connoted with terms such as racism and Islamophobia. These terms are quite often used interchangeably and as synonyms. Miles and Brown (2003: 163) put forward the assertion that whilst the concepts racism and Islamophobia can often be empirically linked phenomena, they can also be characterised as analytically distinct. However there has long been an attempt to define this term within the social science arena. Halliday (1999), whilst accepting its empirical basis, questions its utility. Modood (2005), suggested that Islamophobia be seen as a form of cultural racism, yet others such as Joppke (2007) refute the term in its entirety. In terms of the utilisation of these terms and their distinctiveness, Miles and Brown (2003: 104) suggest ‘racism entails the negative signification or cultural construction of biological or somatic characteristics, and it provides a meaningful description and explanation of the social world’. Contrary to this, according to Miles and Brown (2003), Islamophobia is concerned with the religious identity markers; that is unlike racism, Islamophobia constructs the distinctiveness of Islam and its representatives – Muslims – on the basis of belief and practice rather than supposed biological or somatic characteristics. Racist discourse regarding the Muslim population may not make any reference to religious beliefs or practices. Conversely, Islamophobia, whilst it may make some references to some somatic characteristics, it normally refers to supposedly religious beliefs and practices. Nonetheless, despite highlighting these differences, everyday anti-Muslim discourse at a universal level, may incorporate a meshing of both Islamophobia and racist sentiments and tones. It is this very discourse as illustrated in

previous chapters, which manifests into Muslim communities having to deal with being stigmatised as terrorist and part of a suspect community.

### **Living as a Suspect Community**

Dealing with everyday life as part of a suspect community and the impact this has is telling of the sense of disillusionment with wider Australian society as well as the personal battles in dealing with a sense of not belonging. Respondents were emotive in their responses, with a number of issues dominating their concerns; namely, the severity of measures adopted by the Australian government which is linked to the government discourse as well as the role of the media. Furthermore, and relating back to the former themes, the dichotomy that has been promoted through discourse between moderate and extremist Muslims was raised as well as the difficulties and frustration felt by the Muslim population expressing their freedom of speech. These themes together, identify for respondents what it means to be a suspect community, and how being identified as so, impacts on their lives.

### **The “need” for CVE in Sydney**

The main issue raised by respondents in my research was the level of counter-terror measures adopted within Australia. The vast majority of participants were frustrated with the degree of measures implemented as a means of countering violent extremism. Further frustration was evident when participants stressed the harshness of such measures with some commenting that such measures make it appear a war is arising. Significantly, such frustration even came from some of those who had received CVE funding. The majority of Muslim participants felt that that measures were too harsh or severe and not proportionate to the level of threat that was actually posed. This is evidenced by a male community leader and CVE grant recipient whose concerns surmises the general consensus that,

‘the Australian government went above and beyond the level of proportionality in terms of CT [counter-terrorism] measures and the actual threat. Their counter-terror framework makes it seem like we live in a war zone – in a country that is embarking on a civil war – this country does not require the amount nor degree of measure that are in place’.

Whilst the above stresses that the measures adopted by the Australian government were not proportionate to the perceived threat; they did not state that no threat existed. Other participants however, were perplexed at the implementation of counter-terror measures adamantly arguing;

‘it baffles me as to why all this counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism legislation and measures are being brought in. I do not see nor envisage a threat nor attack coming...these measures are simply not needed’. <sup>68</sup>

Moreover, and stressing the degree of counter-terrorism measures adopted, this participant contends,

‘there has been an abundance of counter-terror measures adopted and implemented by the Australian government to deal with a threat it claims is highly legitimate. I don’t know where they are getting their information because the threat posed here is nothing in comparison to the measures they have brought in... they are not justified in the slightest. They have implanted these big new laws, and brought about these countering violent extremism initiatives to deal with a threat that does not even exist’. <sup>69</sup>

The above participant challenges the legitimacy of the Australian government not only in terms of their counter-terrorism policies and practices but also their intelligence and information gathering. This comment again reiterates previous arguments that the counter-terror measures within Australia are that of a reactionary fashion to events elsewhere and not implemented to deal with a legitimate domestic threat. As stated previously within the Australian Security White paper 2010, the role of the community is vital in countering violent extremism, but the above cases would appear to be counter-productive in gaining Muslim public co-operation and support as those whom engagement is sought with are being alienated.

Indeed, what is striking about the above statements is the level of concern at the proportionality of the Australian governments counter-terror measures to the level of threat. Moreover, a significant finding is the suggestion by these participants that the degree of threat

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<sup>68</sup> Female, 23, International Relations Student; unstructured interview conducted at 3pm on 22 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>69</sup> Male, community leader; unstructured interview conducted at 10am on 6 December 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

being promoted is not genuine. The reiteration of the term ‘actual’ by these participants highlights a level of suspicion that these measures are not being implemented on a genuine or proportionate scale. Contrary to this however, there was support for the measures adopted by the Australian government in terms of their proportionality to the threat. However, this support was in a minority with only three participants voicing their concord with the Australian government that a threat existed and needed to be addressed. Of these three, two were recipients of CVE funding, whilst the other who had been subject to stop and search by authorities on numerous occasions supported the CVE programmes adopted by the Australian government, but was cautious regarding the powers of the police;

‘I think that we do need a good, strong counter-terrorism framework and policy programme...I think that what the Australian government have done and are continuing to do is needed and justified...I feel like we need measures that are able to deal with the threat that we are facing and I feel that those being adopted are proportionate’. <sup>70</sup>

Within these affirmations of support for the work of the Australian government and their counter-terror policies, there is a stressing of the severe nature of the threat. This highlights a belief that the counter-terror measures adopted by the government are proportionate in order to counter this threat. Implicit in the above comments is the idea that through the implementation of counter-terror measures, citizens are being protected from a terrorist threat. The other side of this however, is that in “protecting” one section of the population, the other section is further alienated, marginalised and stigmatised. There is a belief that the Australian government is undertaking its duty to care and protect for its citizens. This suggests a belief in human security over state security whereby the rights of the citizens are protected more than those of the actual state itself. Nonetheless, despite these statements of support, all participants stressed a degree of frustration and aggravation surrounding the implementation of Australian counter-terror measures. An air of anger was also evident within these responses as to the disbelief that such measures were, in fact, being implemented. Those three who were supportive of such measures however, did not stress an air of anger but rather of gratitude that this issue was being addressed in order to protect Australian’s citizens. Nevertheless, within responses from both those in

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<sup>70</sup> Female, CVE funded practitioner; semi-structured interview conducted at 10am on 9 December 2013 in Bondi, Sydney; notes made during interview.

receipt in funding and those who were not, there was a strong level of dissent towards the measures adopted by the Australian government thus challenging the legitimacy and validity of such measures due to the belief that those measures were disproportionate to the threat posed.

Strongly associated and related to the severity of counter-terror measures implemented, is the discourse adopted and promoted by the Australian government in terms of its counter-terror narrative. Government rhetoric, language and discourse was scrutinised by participants for its role in creating and maintain the Muslim as comprising suspect community. All research participants stressed the influence governmental discourse can have on their place in society in terms of creating and reinforcing negative stereotypes. Participants were direct in their contention that the discourse utilised by the government placed them as the basis for counter-terror policy development. Within these responses, there was a sense of fatigue at the placing of the Muslim population as the basis of counter-terror policy. As well as this, participants noted a sense of not belonging in that they were to be protected against (Almond, 2007). This is interesting since a previous respondent stressed the inclusive nature of the Australian government in seeking to protect its citizens via its counter-terror measures. As this young, educated male stresses,

‘the Australian government say that it is Muslims who need to be protected in terms of prevention and counter-radicalisation measures and that it is the wider Australian population such as everyone else who is non-Muslim who need to be protected from Muslims...we are placed as not important in terms of protection but the only important group that needs protected from. This makes us look like the bad guys all time because of a small minority who shouldn’t even be called Muslims because they are not’. <sup>71</sup>

In addition, this participant stressed his concern that the Muslim population was used as scapegoats for counter-terrorism policy and programmes. Within this response, an air of concern is noted surrounding the divisions created not only between the Muslim population and wider Australian society but also within the Muslim population itself. For instance,

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<sup>71</sup> Male, 27, Engineering graduate; unstructured interview conducted at 9am on 3 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

‘it is our community that are being used as a means through the government can implement these programmes. These countering violent extremism things are given to Muslim organisations so it therefore looks like it is us who are the problem...it makes not only the wider Australian society and the public look at us suspiciously but also other Muslims as well. The government say that these grants are given to those within the community who can help most...by giving to the Muslims it is reinforcing the Muslim community as dangerous, as posing a threat and as radical extremists’. <sup>72</sup>

Of particular interest and significance was the reference to the Irish as the suspect community prior to the identification of Muslims as constituting such. Whilst particular contexts were not identified, such a reference highlights the impact of anti-Irish discourse within the British context during the time of the IRA, in terms of fearing a particular group because of events elsewhere. This statement also reflects a belief in opportunistic governments in terms of creating a suspect community through the manipulation of a population because of being a minority;

‘I think governments just use whatever minority population they can manipulate as a means of basing and justifying their policies and practices on. Sure, for years, it was the Irish who were feared because of the IRA...all Irish were regarded and tarred as terrorists because of the actions of a few...now today it is us, the Muslims who are targeted again, because of a small minority. So, I think for the governments to gain support from the public for their policies they need to base them on real life people, before it was the Irish, now it is us the Muslims, and a time will come when it will be another minority’. <sup>73</sup>

These statements stress the concern within this sample of the Muslim population that they, as a whole, are being used as a justification for measures adopted to deal with a minority. Muslims therefore, according to the above statements are seen as being punished for the acts of a minority through negative discourse and counter-terror policies. Furthermore, such a comment poses questions as to the multicultural make-up and policy of Australia. These sentiments

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<sup>72</sup> Male, 52, Imam; semi-structured interview conducted at 10.30am on 3 February 2014 in Sydney CBD; notes made immediately following interview.

<sup>73</sup> Female, 23, student, Iraqi Migrant; unstructured interview conducted at 5pm on 8 December 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

serve to bolster the widely-held belief that a particular agenda of the Howard government was to maintain the status-quo and a “White Australia”, as discussed previously within this thesis. In conjunction to this anti-Muslim and anti-multicultural discourse is the narrative and rhetoric adopted by the media. Australian media too serves as a catalyst for the creation and maintenance of the Muslim population as a suspect community.

### **Media and the creation of a “Suspect Community”**

The Australian government alone, was not identified as promoting a negative discourse towards the Muslim population and sustaining the identification of the Muslim population as a suspect community. The role of the media in producing negative connotations between terrorism, Muslim and Islam was also stressed. Mitchell (2011) reiterates this point stating that the images depicted alongside terrorism tend to be inferences to those seen as Other, or different and inherently violent. Surrounding these images tends to be a negative, polarising discourse that serves to substantiate the suspect community narrative. Mainstream media reporting has a powerful effect on how, not only others view Muslims but also how Muslims view themselves. Indeed, the media is a source of knowledge and information for many who would not have the opportunity to engage with Muslims. As such, the discourse it adopts can have a profound impact on social relations and social cohesion. Within this fieldwork, there was a general consensus toward the powerful role the media holds in shaping societal attitudes and opinions. Participants were sharp in their responses, placing the media at the centre of the anti-Muslim discourse and the subsequent suspect community manifestation. All participants saw the media as fostering a negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims and synonymising Muslims with terrorists. As the media was noted as a provider of knowledge for many, there was a high level of concern that there was a degree of ignorance and lack of knowledge with regard to Islam and Muslims within media stakeholders. This was a worry for many of the respondents who remarked feeling both anxious and a sense of forewarning with regard to the content of media sources. The statements from respondents below highlight this uneasiness;

‘I think there is a simple lack of knowledge within the media outlet itself as to Islam and Muslims. As they educate many as a source of knowledge, their ignorance is therefore becoming someone else’s...I think that is a major problem...because the

media connote Muslim with terrorist and some do not know any different...that is reinforcing the stereotype. It really is no wonder we are a suspect community'.<sup>74</sup>

Some respondents felt it was a struggle to conduct their daily lives because of the stereotype that surrounds Muslim in Sydney and wider Australia. Deserving some attention is the remark made in the previous narrative by a practitioner calling her own community, a suspect community. It appears strange to coin such a phrase when participating in the very activities which are claimed with having maintaining the suspect community discourse.

Furthermore, there was a great sense of Muslim targeting over other minorities in terms of the denationalisation of news stories. A number of participants were upset and irritated by the focus on Islam and Muslims as the most important aspect of the reporting. Moreover, the motive of such activity was questioned with respondents calling into question the agenda of media outlets. Poole (2002, 2006) concludes that media representations of Muslims is that of a homogenous monolith, therefore all are depicted and stereotyped as violent and threatening. This too serves to maintain the suspect community discourse in wider society. Stressing the impact such reporting has on their lives, some respondents were frustrated at the thought media sources did not recognise or care about the negative effect. The following statement confirms this;

'The media has a massive role to play in how we are seen and treated...most definitely. I mean the stories concerning Muslims are sensationalised, and the Muslim identity marker is stressed, if it was a Christian or a Jew, it would not be mentioned...but a Muslim...its mentioned in the headline just to grab people's attention and even more so, to further drive home that we are all bad, evil...to criminalise us at least if not equate us as terrorists. I don't think they [the media] realise what this does to us...the negative and detrimental impact it is having'.<sup>75</sup>

So far, participants are highly sceptical of the media and have raised concerns over their role as a source of knowledge. As well as this, participants have stressed the negative connotations

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<sup>74</sup> Female, CVE funded practitioner; unstructured interview conducted at 5pm on 5 September 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>75</sup> Female, student; interview conducted at 4pm on 7 September 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney, notes made during interview.



and stereotyping of the Muslim population in reporting as well as the sensationalising of stories. The impact of such reporting and coverage has been noted by participants as negative and adverse. Further participants reiterate and elaborate on these issues;

‘Without doubt, the media has a huge impact on the Muslim community. The words it uses and how it frames the story concerning Muslims...has a knock- on effect from that of simply writing or reporting on a story. There appears to be an underlying tone within media reporting concerning Muslims...that is to make sure the Muslims appear as the baddie and all others as the victim. That is what I notice...there is very rarely if at all, a story highlighting the stresses of the Muslim community...it is always the other way around...the non-Muslim as the victim’. <sup>76</sup>

Both the former and the subsequent statements refer to the negative way in which media reporting is impacting on their lives. Both responses make reference to the Muslim as the perpetrator and all others as the victim. This in turn creates a sense of exclusion as previously alluded to and serves to confirm the “them and us” dichotomy. For some respondents, this narrative is becoming all too common and overpowering with some stating they are ‘sick of it’. Respondents stressed their feeling of being constantly under surveillance and how this is having a detrimental impact on their day-to-day lives. Yet again, a sense of anger was evident that because they are Muslim, everyday activities such as going to the supermarket are an uphill struggle. The inclusive, multicultural nature of Australia was also called into question with some questioning why they, as both Australian and Muslim could not be categorised within the inclusive category;

‘the way we are treated, how we undertake our everyday duties and how we conduct ourselves is watched and scrutinised...this is because of how the media reports stories about Muslims...that our way of life and culture is full of practices and rituals that could be linked to terrorism. This makes us all seem like terrorists. The media pick on us so as to sell stories and to further reiterate the already common belief, because of them in the first place...that Muslims are dangerous, we pose a serious threat to Australia and that we are all terrorists because of our culture and way of life. They are fostering a

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<sup>76</sup> Female, 24, student; interview conducted at 10am on 19 December 2013 in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made during interview.

suspect community and this labelling is having a bad impact on our everyday life. It's hard to go about our daily life, people staring at you, it makes me quite angry that I can't go about my daily life but all others can in this apparent inclusive society...makes me rethink what kind of life I have here...and I was born here'. <sup>77</sup>

Again, the reiteration of the role of the media as forbearers of knowledge is a significant concern raised by participants. The failure to distinguish, and to rather homogenise Muslims, creates a suspect community within which all Muslims are classed. This stereotyping is having a serious negative effect on the lives of Muslims within the Sydney area making some of those whom participated question their desire to remain. Findings from other studies looking at other states within Australia have found similar concerns, with the media being classed as playing a significant role in the creation and preservation of a suspect community within the Australian context, as a whole (See Aly, 2010). Moreover, in relation to this, was the use of key terms without full knowledge or recognition for their complexity. For instance, the vast majority of participants who felt that terms such as Shari'a, jihad and halal were used to signify danger and terrorism and to further foster negative stereotyping through the misuse of such terms. Petley and Richardson (2011) suggest that the improper use of such terms further substantiated the homogenising tendencies of the media. Participants felt disrespected when terms were used incorrectly and questioned would the same happen with Jewish or Christian terms. Moreover, participants were passionate about the use of key terms such as halal as they are important everyday terms that guide the Muslim way of life. Participants therefore felt that their way of life and Islam were not shown the respect they deserved and highlight these concerns with statements such as,

'they [the media] just use Muslim words in the wrong context just to create fear...they don't know or understand the full basis or correct use of such terms. Because of the way these terms are used wrongly, they constitute fear and suspicion even when they are not supposed to. It is just disrespectful to Muslims to use important words the wrong way. This makes living here harder too because we have to defend words that we

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<sup>77</sup> Male, 19, Iraqi Migrant; interview conducted at 5pm on 20 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made immediately following interview.

shouldn't have to...makes people more suspicious of us too because they think everything about us is bad...even words'.<sup>78</sup>

These statements again reiterate the assertion that the role of the media is central in the fostering of a suspect community. Participants are adamant in their assertion that how the media utilises terminology impacts on how the wider Australian public view them and as such, how they go about their daily lives. Frustration at the level of ignorance within media outlets around Islam was reiterated throughout discussion and how this too informs the wider public and maintains that sense of suspicion. Moreover, the media exacerbates the negative stereotyping of the Muslim population as well as the already rife tensions within not only the wider Australian population but also within the Muslim population itself. Indeed, whilst tension is evident between Muslim and wider Australian society, tension is also evident between and amongst the various sects of Islam itself. Participants stressed this concern through discussion stating this was particularly evident with regard to the discourse adopted by both media and government regarding moderate Muslims and extremists.

### **The Power of Words**

Kundani (2014) contends that the use of the terms “moderate” and “extremist” has become increasingly associated with counter-terror policy, as well as within public debates surrounding the need for the Muslim population to disassociate themselves from those who are deemed as dangerous or as posing a threat. Such a dichotomy also serves to substantiate and reiterate the idea of a suspect community, that there are those within the Muslim community whom one ought to be suspicious about. Within this framework, some participants stressed concern that distinguishing between “moderate” and “extremist” was actually counter-productive in that moderates were regarded as socially acceptable whilst extremists were seen as dangerous, violent and as posing a threat. Participants in this research were passionate about the use of these terms stressing confusion as to why such a distinction was being made within government rhetoric and media narrative. A sense of sadness was evident that further exclusion was being fostered through such distinctions that was not wanted or needed. The further creation of fear and suspicion around the Muslim population was reiterated resulting in the preservation of the suspect community.

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<sup>78</sup> Male, CVE participant; interview conducted at 9am on 8 January 2014 in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made during interview.

‘these labels are unnecessary, those that are labelled as moderate are welcomed into society and are not regarded with as much suspicion...extremists however, they are treated with real suspicion...I don’t really know why such distinctions are made...just another way of making people suspicious of us and further alienating us from society...I am not an extremist but I participate in these CVE things because I want to learn more...about my religion, my country’. <sup>79</sup>

Interesting are the comments above, in that although respondents stress their disgust at the use of such terms; they still refer to these terms and identify themselves as not extremist. The use of such terminology has a damaging impact on these respondents, affecting their daily lives in terms of interaction within their own population, as well as with wider Australian society. Such terminology and the pitting against each other makes those moderates appear favourable whilst the extremists are seen as other, dangerous and unfavourable. The creation and maintenance of Muslims as suspect community, is circular in nature therefore, as all instances serve to reiterate this notion. The notion of suspect community as Muslim is strongly supported with the above remark stressing concern that extremists can only be found in Muslim communities therefore bolstering the suspect community narrative. Indeed, this process of labelling has meant that those who are deemed as moderate are regarded as “lazy Muslims” and not following the religion strictly, as well as having too close of a relationship with government and authorities and not exercising enough critique of government policies. Extremists, on the other hand, are seen as outside society and are treated as such via exclusion, suspicion and fear. Whilst some participants themselves used the distinction referring to themselves as moderate, these same individuals agreeing with the majority, felt that making such distinctions as moderate and extremist was an unhelpful tool and was counter-productive in so far as building community relations and community cohesion. Indeed, such distinctions polarised the Muslim population into two camps and served to preserve the notion of suspect community.

In relation to the above concerns, participants raised the freedom to express their beliefs and opinions in public, predominantly those of a political nature, as one of discomfort. This was due to a fear of being labelled a sympathiser of terrorism or “un-Australian” if those

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<sup>79</sup> Female, Australian Muslim, CVE Islamic learning participant; interview conducted at 10am on 15 December 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

opinions or beliefs were constituted as going against those of the majority of Australians or indeed, the Australian government. As such therefore, many participants felt safer withholding their beliefs from public space and instead not using their freedom of speech. This is a powerful and interesting point in light of the fact that Australia places freedom of speech as quite significant in its “way of life” and what it stands for, yet, individuals withhold their opinion for fear of repercussions. These sentiments are reflected within the response below;

‘I have learnt my lesson voicing my opinion...I voiced my concern and discomfort about the new legislative changes and their potential impact on our community...it was not liked at all...I was treated very badly...I was seen suspiciously then because they said if you are Australian and want to protect this country then these measures should be welcomed...so now I don’t say anything...it just isn’t worth it; you know’. <sup>80</sup>

The former accounts stress the anger that is felt towards the calibre of counter-terror measures that have been implemented in the Australian context, whilst simultaneously highlighting the fear and helplessness these participants feel with feeling uncomfortable speaking out because they are Muslim. As well as this and as previously alluded to within this thesis, are questions concerning civil liberties such as the freedom of speech. This fear has stifled these individuals’ ability and right to voice their opinion; a concern that has been raised on numerous occasions regarding Australia’s counter-terrorism portfolio. Moreover, this is a direct link to the stigmatisation of a suspect community.

The above narratives highlight the fear and anxiety within the research sample, in voicing their opinions for dread of the repercussions. Interesting also with the above remark is the point that this individual is involved in a CVE programme. Indeed, it almost appears that this individual is involved in CVE as a means through which to appear moderate. The apprehension felt by participants in being categorised as a supporter of terrorism or as being against a country that “welcomed” them is too strong for these participants to be vocal regarding an issue that they feel strongly about. Moreover, the fear of being seen as ungrateful was merged with a degree of anger that that is how one believes they would be treated should they speak up. This sense of trepidation leading to and resulting from the suppression of one’s

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<sup>80</sup> Female, former CVE funded practitioner; interview conducted on 17 December 2013 at 4pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

right to voice their opinion is as a result of the discourse depicting Muslims as suspect. However, from fieldwork, there appears to be a no-win situation for Muslims, for when they fail to voice their opinions and participate in debate there is condemnation but likewise, when there are those who speak out they are viewed as a nuisance and as not embracing “the Australian way”. In either case, both serve to saturate the Muslim population as the suspect community.

Indeed, this decision to not participate or contribute and ultimately, disengage from public debate out of fear to voice one’s opinion was linked to the experience of policing the Muslim population. Of all the 64 participants in this study, 17 had had an experience with police in the Sydney area with regard to violent extremism and terrorism. Eleven of these were male and six of these were female with ages ranging from 18 to 61. All of those who participated felt that their experience with the police, both state and federal, was because they were Muslims. Participants’ experiences ranged from having their passports seized, being questioned due to their wish to travel overseas, and the questioning of participants over their family members, friends or associates, who were currently under police surveillance. Moreover, these participants were uneasy that such instances served to reiterate and to drive the suspect community rhetoric, narrative and discourse. Participants illustrate their experiences and elaborate to highlight the impact and effect such experiences have on the Muslim population, both individually and collectively.

‘I wanted to go back to Egypt and Turkey to visit family but I was not allowed...they have already charged me wrongly with terrorism offences...do they not know I am not going to do anything...I had my passport taken off me...like...they are reining my family...imprisoning me wrongly in another country for stuff I didn’t do...my family life is very hard now...I don’t know if it can be fixed’.<sup>81</sup> (male, 45, ex-prisoner of war)

The detrimental impact on family and community life is made clear in the emotive accounts above. The desire to maintain familial contact and engagement is pivotal for these individuals, yet is exceedingly difficult, because of the cloud of suspicion that hangs over them. Moreover, the continued suspicion towards those who once were prosecuted, by authorities, some

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<sup>81</sup> Male, ex-Guantanamo Bay Prisoner; semi-structured interview conducted at 10am on 12 December in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

wrongly, for terrorism related incidents stresses the distrust amongst authorities towards these individuals. Such activity has a severe detrimental impact on these individuals at a familial level as well as emotional level. The distrust by authorities' further feeds into the suspect community discourse.

'the police here...they say they want to get to know us and "make friends" but that is not the case at all...they just want intelligence...like if they want to get to know us why don't they ask us what our favourite TV programmes are and what books we like to read instead of how often do you pray, which imams do you support the most...I feel like they are always suspicious of us and are always expecting the worst...they always have suspicious eyes towards us. They focus too much on the terrorism side of thing...what about the other issues that are affecting us...the Muslim community such as crime rates, anti-social behaviour...they need more focus than terrorism...those are the real issues'.<sup>82</sup>

A contentious issue raised above is the questioning of individuals in relation to other persons. The involving of associates brings into question the exact nature of community engagement of authorities; to what extent is it genuine engagement and what extent is intelligence gathering? Participants were vocal in their frustration and antagonism at the focus on terrorism and violent extremism during engagement with authorities. Participants felt that terrorism was viewed by authorities as an Islamic concept and that was the reason and nature of engagement. Indeed, the majority of participants were more concerned about other issues such as unemployment, drugs and crime but felt that those issues were not recognised or at least important with the authorities. A sense of one-way engagement was stressed in that Muslims were there to simply provide intelligence on each other with very little in return, in terms of resolving the issues important to them. Moreover, and quite obviously, the continued engagement with the Muslim population as a means of intelligence gathering and its inception predominantly in the post 9/11 era, confirms Muslims as suspect. These explicit scenes of stereotyping serve to further drive the suspect community agenda fostered by both the Australian government and the media. This has further implications as to how some Muslims perceive the police in terms of how they conduct themselves whilst on duty and this can have a forward effect on their desire to

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<sup>82</sup> Male, community member, peaceful protester; interview conducted at 10am on 9 January in Sydney CBD; notes made immediately following interview.

cooperate with authorities on matters concerning and related to counter-terrorism. The contributions given above highlight the participants' concerns surrounding the practice of police within the Sydney region. Again, fatigue at the policing of counter-terrorism was evident through dialogue, with notable discomfort as to the degree of consultation that occurred between the police, authorities and the Muslim population more so than any other minority grouping.

In discussing their perception and experience of procedural justice by authorities predominantly the police force, many admitted their hostility towards authorities particularly the police as well as the government for their counter-terrorism frameworks and practices. Reasons for such hostility were first and foremost the government and the counter-terror policies themselves, in that they targeted the Muslim population and were in effect brought in to "deal with Muslims" as such. Furthermore, it was felt and believed even by those who had not had first-hand contact with the police or authorities with regard to countering terrorism that Muslims were consulted more often than any others within Australian society about terrorism and terrorism related issues. This, therefore, raised questions as to the fairness in police practice as well as the point of being perceived innocent until found guilty. However, one must be cautious here as those respondents who had not experienced first-hand were informed via others and their reliability should be treated with caution. Still, importantly here, is the evidence that even persons not affected regard themselves as being part of a suspect community and use these accounts, whether true or not, to illustrate this feeling. Doing so further stresses and confirms the experiences of these Muslims as suspect.

Participants were quick to explain their justifications for hostility towards the Australian government and authorities which portrays a desire to be seen as legitimate in their thinking. There were those participants who stressed their hostility towards Australian authorities for what they were failing to do in terms of counter-terrorism:

'The government is failing in its counter-terrorism efforts...it is alienating the very people it is seeking to talk with, communicate with and engage with...everything they are doing is counter-productive...do they not realise that their actions have consequences...oh that's right they don't because I remember hearing that very statement that their actions do not have an impact on our lives and therefore do not have



consequences from a government minister...that just shows the calibre of people and government whose hands our country is in...it is quite worrying and sad'.<sup>83</sup>

This remark above is worth giving more attention to as it is implicitly stating that because of the actions of the Australian government, there is the possibility of fostering radicalisation despite such counter-terrorism measures which is to de or counter radicalise. With reference to the statement by the minister made by this participant, the then Attorney General when asked about the perceived consequences and accountability for participation in the war on Iraq such as inciting radicalisation, the response was that such actions do not reap such consequences. There was, either willingly or not, a lack of acknowledgement that participation in the invasion of Iraq could ultimately result in the radicalisation of some Muslims within Australia. Either with intention or unintentionally; such remarks imply that the counter-terror measures adopted by the Australian government are required. Essentially, the consequences of counter-terror policies and practices are not as important as the measures implemented to address the perceived threat. The effect of such actions on the Australian population is not regarded as significant compared to the need to address the threat posed to Australia as a measure of national security.

Essentially, the counter-terrorism measures adopted and utilised by the Australian government, as previously alluded to and articulated throughout this thesis, according to those who participated in this research have a negative impact on those residing in Sydney, particularly the Muslim population. This negative impact has culminated in an aura of suspicion surrounding Muslims thus resulting in the manifestation of a suspect community. Through this fieldwork, it has become increasingly apparent that because of this sense of suspect community, the Muslim population continuously feel under attack, essentially, under siege. Within this stigmatisation of suspect community, there was a common albeit regretful consensus, that all Muslims were seen as sympathisers of terrorism and that terrorism was somehow an Islamic phenomenon.

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<sup>83</sup> Male, Community leader; interview conducted at 9am on 13 January 2014 in Maroubra, Sydney; notes made during interview.

Within these responses there is a strong concern surrounding the stigmatisation of all Muslims. Mythen, Walkgate and Khan (2013) contend that a consequence of the treatment of the Muslim population in terms of the labelling of such as suspect is their belief in collective attribution whereby all Muslims are negatively viewed due to violent extremism committed in the name of Islam. Participants stressed their frustration and angst at being categorised as ‘the same’ as those who are deemed radical or extreme. Indeed, some participants felt angered that all Muslims were being tarnished because of the actions of a minority. There was a sense that it is the Muslim population who are left to deal with the aftermath of terror in the name of Islam and thus, to a degree, afforded the creation and maintenance of the suspect community to Islamists. Further primary data reiterates these issues, including;

‘it is not those who are out committing or fighting jihad, or believing they are, at least, that have to bear the brunt of their actions, no, it is us here, the everyday Muslim trying to live in peace and harmony with everyone that has to deal with all the crap that comes with what they have done...it is me and my brothers and sisters who have to put up with the everyday racism, suspicious looks and fear’. <sup>84</sup>

The reflection above both substantiates and reiterates the suggestion made by Mythen, Walkgate and Khan (2013) concerning collective attribution which further drives the suspect community argument. During discussion, the majority of participants stressed how the extent they were viewed with suspicion became routine within their everyday practices such as going to the grocers, going to the mosque or simply meeting friends for a picnic in the park. These issues are evident most clearly in the following recollection;

‘I went for a picnic last Sunday with my friends to the park a little out towards the Eastern suburbs...once we put down our bags to take out our rug to sit on...oh you could see the fear in peoples’ faces...the anxiety that we were pulling out a bomb...it actually made me chuckle a little to myself...but it made me more angry and sad than anything...we were there to do the same as those other people that were there...have a nice picnic and spend time with friends and family...but because we are Muslim and because of our head dress...they didn’t trust us and were scared...I was thinking after I

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<sup>84</sup> Female, student; interview conducted at 4pm on 1 October 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

should have went over and offered them some of my home made chocolate brownies...they probably would have ran away screaming ‘terrorist, terrorist’ before I got their length but...’.<sup>85</sup>

It is important to note at this point that inferences of fear were common within both female and male responses. Both males and females stated their fear in continuing their everyday practices within Sydney due to the suspicion that surrounded them and the fear as to what this suspicion could lead to. However, due to the more obvious Muslim dress of women, fear was more prevalent amongst women than men. Nonetheless, the manifestation of the idea of suspect community has impacted negatively on both males and females in their everyday lives.

The aforementioned remarks highlight the everyday obstacles the Muslim population must overcome in going about their daily activities. These daily activities are made all the more stressful because of the discourse, rhetoric and narrative adopted and promoted by both the Australian government as well as the media. In turn, the wider Australian public are influenced by such discourses resulting in fear and loathing, ultimately resulting in the distrust of Muslims culminating in the creation and maintenance of the Muslim population as a suspect community.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the impact the counter-terrorism package adopted and implemented by the Australian government through advanced police powers, focus on community engagement and CVE Initiatives have had on those included in this research. The discourse favoured by those in power such as the government and the media has led to the creation of Muslims as a suspect community. This has led to a profoundly negative perception of the Australian government and their counter-terror framework as well as a detrimental impact on the daily lives of Australia’s Muslims.

This creation of a suspect community has led to altering everyday practices by many Muslims due to fear of attack. Moreover, this creation of a suspect community has fostered a hostile attitude towards both the Australian government and authorities. This has a detrimental effect on police and community relations as well as on community engagement which is regarded as pivotal in the fight against terror according to the Australian government. As well

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<sup>85</sup> Female, CVE participant; interview conducted on 23 December 2013 at 4.30pm in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made during interview.

as this hostility, there is a lack of support for the counter-terror framework adopted by the government in terms of its targeting of the Muslim population as well as its proportionality to the threat posed within the Australian context. It is essentially this targeting of the Muslim population with counter-terror strategies merged with the anti-Muslim discourse which has culminated in the suspect community narrative.

The similarities made to the Irish in terms of their treatment as suspect community reflects awareness that it is minority groups who are targeted as well as raising the concern that because of the actions of a minority; the majority too are tarnished and it is precisely those who bear the brunt of the consequences. Essentially, the counter-terror framework adopted by the Australian government has led to the creation, manifestation and maintenance of a suspect community of which the sense of being under siege has been the most profound impact on the Muslim population having a negative everyday detrimental effect on their lives.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Countering Violent Extremism and Identity Formation**

#### **Introduction**

It cannot be denied that we now live in an age dominated by a discourse and discussion concerning violent extremism, terrorism and how to counter the threat posed by such. As continuously alluded to throughout this thesis, this threat is both promoted and perceived to be posed by those who follow a militant interpretation of Islam. This labelling of Muslims as potential terrorists, according to participants, has a significant impact on their daily lives in terms of the creation of a suspect community as discussed previously within this thesis, as well as on how Muslims perceive themselves, not only within their own communities but also within wider Australian society. Linked to this, are the attitudes of non-Muslims to the Muslim population within Australia. It must be stressed however, that the opinions of Muslims cannot be pitted symmetrically against those of non-Muslims as there are a whole range of different opinions and attitudes within Australian society. It is precisely both how Muslims perceive themselves, along with how others perceive them, through which identities are formed and particular identity markers become more prominent. Indeed, as Akers (2013: 101) states, ‘the identity a person takes will be profoundly shaped by the ways in which others identify and react to him or her’. It is precisely this; the perception of the Muslim population from a sample, of the consequences of the implementation of Countering Violent Extremism programmes, with which this chapter is concerned; that is what impact does the adoption of the Countering Violent Extremism framework have on the identity formation of a sample of the Muslim population. Within this, there are other contributing factors, however, such as age, ethnic and cultural background and the different roles and meanings certain identity makers hold. In relation to this and of particular importance within this chapter to the forming of identities, are the concepts and realities of social inclusion and social exclusion. These concepts play a central role in the shaping of one’s identity with reference to one’s sense of belonging within society. Central to all this, for the purposes of this thesis, are the counter-terror measures adopted by the Australian government in terms of their countering violent extremism strategy. This chapter seeks to illustrate how the components of the countering violent extremism strategy - those are the government and media in terms of discourses and narratives in conjunction with wider Australian society and their anti-Muslim stance - have contributed to the shaping of Muslim identity formation within the Australian context. Previous scholarly work looking at

the identity formation of peoples in times of personal or societal conflict such as victims of racism, or in the case of Muslims -Islamophobia -, have identified particular processes of identity formation adopted under such circumstances (Aly, 2007). These too were the conclusions arrived at following fieldwork in Sydney. These will be explored in more detail in the following chapter, but to offer a brief introductory indication, findings suggested that for some respondents in times of conflict, there was a re-affirmation of their faith and their pride; whilst others sought to suppress their Islamic/Muslim identity in favour of a more anglicised or Australian identity as a means of achieving social inclusion and feeling a sense of belonging.

### **Muslim background in Australia**

Although previously examined at the beginning of this thesis, it is perhaps important here to reiterate the diverse composition of Australia's Muslim population and in doing so, stress the varied identity markers this population possess, for instance cultural, linguistic, ethnic divides. As previously alluded to, numerous times throughout this thesis, Muslims have a long historical relationship with Australia. From the Afghan cameleers who arrived in the early 1880s to the waves of migrants who entered following the Second World War, to the arrivals of Lebanese following the Civil War in the 1970s to the constant influx of new arrivals migrating today; Australia has not a homogenous Muslim population but rather one that is multicultural and multi-ethnic. Australia's Muslim population includes Australian Muslims and also converts to Islam, that is both those who were born in Australia, and those who have become citizens, as well as those who migrated from a wide array of countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Malaysia, Africa and Eastern Europe, to name but a few. For instance, according to the 2011 Census, 2.2% of those in Australia identified as Muslim. Of this figure, 38.5% were born in Australia. This is an extremely important factor when deciphering one's identity as those who have lived in their country of origin for longer may have stronger ties with that country and therefore promote their ethnic and cultural traits over their Islamic identity or combine both. As a result of this diversity, there are different linguistic traits, ethnic markers and cultural practices. As such therefore, there will be different emphasis placed on diverse identity markers, some individuals may place more emphasis on ethnic identity markers whilst others emphasise their cultural or linguistic traits. Due to these complexities, forming one's identity and promoting certain identity markers over others is a process that can take into consideration a number of factors, such as sense of belonging and inclusion, fear, public discourse surrounding their population and personal desire. In order to appreciate the process

that one can go through in order to form their identity, it may be useful to uncover this process in terms of the mechanisms through which identity is fostered.

Indeed, it is worth noting that the literature abounds on the identity construction of Muslims in the West. This thesis aims to contribute to this field of work, by looking at the identity formation of Muslims in the Australian context with particular reference to the impact of counter-terror measures on identity formation. Nevertheless, the abounding literature is useful in setting the scene and laying out the theoretical framework through which it is claimed identity formation occurs. These theories will then be buttressed with empirical data gathered through fieldwork, to either support or refute such claims. Moreover, and importantly, before launching into an analysis of these theoretical frameworks one must recognise and address the point that this study cannot be taken in abstract but rather, realises that any understanding of identities or identity formation deserves and therefore requires an integrated approach (Kabir, 2011). This is an approach which is aware that this understanding cannot be divorced from perceptions of both the local and national landscape as well as the international environment. It is perhaps important to reiterate some ideas previously alluded to at the beginning of this thesis regarding identity formation in Australia. The Muslim population within Australia is diverse but yet appears to be viewed by those within the media and the government as a monolith. Such diversity within an environment that does not recognise nor welcome multiculturalism can cause unease and discomfort. Tension between generations and their perception as to how they should conduct themselves too is a source of tension and unease for migrant communities. How one perceives oneself in terms of their locale but also in terms of the national landscape is paramount in the forming of one's identity. The nature of the international environment in which one finds oneself a player too is crucial in manoeuvring identity markers. It is this which this thesis seeks to investigate and elaborate on; how the current security environment in Australia impacts the forming of identity for Muslims.

### **Muslim Identities: Complex and Diverse**

The emergence of terrorism, the growth of radical Islam and the spread of counter-terrorism measures, have resulted in a manifestation of literature and studies seeking to understand the pathway to radicalisation. Within this manifestation, Yasmeen (2008) contends two schools of thought have emerged; that of "counter-terrorism" where focus is placed on the pathways leading to radicalisation, the second is the "opportunity deficit" school of thought which seeks to understand the conditions and experiences of individuals who become

radicalised in accordance with the emergence of “home grown” terrorism. Yasmeen (2010) is critical of this excessive focus on radicalisation and on the minority populations such as Muslims. Such a narrow focus serves to inhibit our understanding and appreciation of the experience of the majority living in Australia. Within this there exists a need to understand the ‘dynamic and diverse nature of views, beliefs and meaning assigned to “being a Muslim” by Muslims in western societies’ (Yasmeen, 2010: 8). The role of institutions, structures, conditions and circumstances that have a part in fostering these diversities and the subsequent manifestations of Muslim identities not only in Australia, but in Western society more generally, need to be addressed.

In addition, because of the diverse range of identity markers evident within, and amongst the Muslim population, identities are not fixed but are rather fluid. Identities adapt to the surrounding environment be that social, political or cultural. As a consequence, identities are therefore continuously evolving and engage with the sources and structures of information which surround them. With widespread, continuous access to various sources of information, from newspapers to social media platforms, ‘individuals are exposed to and influenced by ideas of Islam and local/global situations that constantly shape and re-shape their relationship to their immediate environment’ (Yasmeen, 2008: 8). A degree of human agency thus ensues whereby individuals contribute to this wealth of knowledge and ‘in the process shape and re-shape the context in which others develop their ideas and identities as well’ (Yasmeen, 2010: 9). The local, national and international environment therefore play a central role in the shaping of one’s identity from face to face contacts at the local level, to discourse at the national level and to global counter-terror efforts at the international level.

### **Theories of Identity**

Long stands the contested issue as to whether or not there exists a “national community” in the Muslim world. This further complicates the existing difficulty in trying to define or examine the concept of Islamic identity, as noted ‘the ideal of a national community in the Muslim world and its demarcation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by colonial powers further complicated the concept of Islamic identity’ (Saeed and Akbarzadeh, 2011:4). Furthermore, latent tensions between “Muslim” and “Australian” identities have a long history in Australian nationalist discourses. However, since September 2001, the two parts of the designation Muslim-Australian have seemed to pull in diametrically opposed directions (Mansouri, 2010).



Although addressed at the beginning of this thesis, it is important to reiterate the complexities of conceptualisations and theories surrounding identity. The concept of identity globally, not merely in the context of Islam is one which has received significant attention. Numerous scholars such as Kabir (2008), Noble et al (1999), Saeed and Akbarzadeh (2011) and Mansouri (2008), note that identities are not static but instead shifting, plural and even contradictory. It is further asserted that ‘cultural and personal identity is shaped to a large extent by our culture and the environment in which we live’ (Kabir, 2013: 42). Many theories have evolved as to the process of identity formation and why one forms particular identities. In conceptualising identity, some have described two fundamentally different senses of self: the Western or individualistic construal of self or conversely the construal of self that is more common in many non-Western, collectivistic cultures. The former construal of self holds a strong belief in the separateness of individuals and the maintenance of the individual as a separate self-contained entity (Kabir 2008). Conversely, in non-Western, collectivist cultures the emphasis is placed on the fundamental connectedness of human beings. Thus, the primary concern is for individuals to fit in and maintain interdependence among individuals (Kabir, 2008). With this dichotomy, there is no allowance for a mixing of the construal of the self that incorporates elements of both cultures. It is entirely possible for individuals to have both an individualistic and a collectivistic stance or indeed many stances in-between. In addition, it has been suggested that there exists not only in the Australian context but generally, in the construal of self, a bi-cultural diversity; that is in those who are minorities and are exposed to at least two cultures. This dichotomy is simplistic in that it offers a simple differentiation between Western and non-Western cultures, when this is not necessarily the case. For the following participant, cultural affiliation was fluid,

‘I am Lebanese in that I practice the culture but I am also Australian...I practice Australian culture too...I am not one or the other but I am both’.<sup>86</sup>

The formation of one’s identity in the post 9/11 world has become more difficult, particularly for Muslims. This difficulty however, is not new to the post 9/11 period but rather, has historical roots in the Australian context. Australian Muslim settlement has grown and evolved from the early sporadic settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, where no Muslim society existed, to the arrival of the Afghan cameleers. As a consequence of cameleers’ arrival and their

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<sup>86</sup> Male, community leader, Lebanese; interview conducted at 5pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 in Bondi, Sydney; notes made during interview.

establishment of local ‘towns’ as well as a mosque, there emerged a sense of society and even as the Muslim population grew, Muslims still comprised less than one percent of the total population come the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Muslim population whilst growing in numbers, remained marginalised and “othered” making difficult their sense of belonging to the Australian national identity. Following the abolition of the policy of White Australia as well as the politics of multiculturalism, but not necessarily the practice, ethnic based groups began to emerge and become more prominent, Muslims within Australia were fostering their ethnic identity markers over others as a means of belonging and creating a sense of solidarity.

With regard to this, Noble et al (1999) and Saeed (2011) suggest that ethnic identities too, are ‘cultural constructions, not primordial or biologically given as “common-sense” understandings imply’ (Noble et al, 1999: 29). Mass immigration to Australia in the post-war period was on a larger scale and from a more diverse range of sources than elsewhere in the world, therefore in this context, ‘race, culture and ethnicity have become increasingly important in contemporary social formations’ (Noble et al, 1999: 30). These attributes and identity markers too are significant in the dynamics of national identity formation.

## National Identity

‘There is no “real” Australia waiting to be uncovered. A national identity is an invention’. White (1981:42)

The concept of national identity and what this encapsulates for individuals in terms of their identity formation is crucial in seeking to understand how a sense of belonging in the wider national context impacts upon identity formation. Great attention has been paid throughout to the nature of Australia’s history in terms of its immigration policies and its policies on “multiculturalism”. This shapes national identity; both for those who feel included and those who feel more excluded.

Goulbourne writing in 1999 (cited in Rashid, 2007: 9) makes an important point in relation to national identity in which he states that, ‘people sharing a common territory, but holding a variety of moral and ethical precepts embedded in cultural norms, are likely sooner rather than later to become antagonistic when the only thing they are presumed to share is their difference’. This is a crucial point as it stresses the differences in beliefs and norms that exist within society and how difficult a national identity is to define. Such differences too are reiterated through media and government discourses previously alluded to. In addition, with regard to the political culture and climate and its relationship to the fostering of a national identity, Dijkink, (1996: 92) is critical suggesting that, Australia’s reactive nature to global events and its tendency to implement laws within its own country due to events elsewhere, ‘leaves the country in a confused state, furthering the criticism that it still has an immature sense of national identity in dire need of referring every question to “universal values”’. Reigniting the national identity debate in the mid-1990s, Howard sought to make a return to the White Australia period with a re-focus on whiteness in cultural terms, i.e. “Anglo-Celtic identity”, as constituting a core component of the Australian national identity. Central to Howard’s configuration of national identity was “Othering” where he sought to exclude those whom he felt were “un-Australian” and could not contribute to his “Australia”. Furthermore, a discourse of terrorism and counter-terrorism were used as a means to achieve this, as well as to create and maintain the division between Australians and “Others”. Australian Muslims, in Howard’s mind did not constitute part of the Australian identity; they did not contribute to Australia but rather caused upheaval because of their perceived incompatibility with the culture, norms and values Australia holds dear.

What “Australian” encapsulates for an individual has implications for their identity formation. For one participant, fitting under the so-called banner of “Australian” is not important, rather it is how she herself, feels she can contribute to Australian society,

‘for me, I don’t need to meet the criteria of what someone else tells me it is to be Australian, I am Australian, I may not have been born here but this is my home, I contribute to society, I educate and I socialise, I help with its so called multicultural, I am Australian’.<sup>87</sup>

This sentiment and attitude was reiterated by one participant,

‘I don’t need the government or the media or some sort of test to tell me whether or not I am Australian – I am Australian because I feel Australian – I may not look like your typical Australian but who does – what is a typical Australian? I love this country, but I also love my Muslimness – I can be both – Australian and Muslim’.<sup>88</sup>

A strong sense of asserting agency and belonging on discourses of exclusion imposed on Muslims from outside is evident here. The former statement suggests that in order to feel included within society and as capable of being described as Australian; is in fact ‘a *feeling*; it is not characterised by ethnicity, or race or cultural tradition but rather a sense of belonging and a *feeling of belonging* to that society’ (Kabir, 2011: 255). The latter statement too reiterates such points but develops such attitudes further. For instance, this male questions who or what is a typical Australian whilst he suggests that he himself does not characterise a “typical Australian” by appearance. Such remarks suggest awareness and an appreciation of the multicultural makeup of Australian society and that there are no single characteristics or traits which typify “Australian-ness”. This too may constitute a defence against racial notions of nationhood. As well as this, such comments suggest an attempt by these leaders to present themselves as part of Australia (Kabir, 2011: 255). Furthermore, such remarks ‘counter constructions of “Australian-ness” as defined by Anglo-Celtic heritage’ (Kabir, 2011: 258). Moreover, this young male through his remarks refutes the incompatibility argument of being

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<sup>87</sup> Female, community activist; interview conducted 2 February 2014 at 3.30pm in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>88</sup> Male, community leader; interview conducted 8 February 2014 at 6pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

Australian and being Muslim by contending that ‘I can be both’. The question of ethnic, cultural or religious background is therefore one that is not vital or an essential component in feeling Australian or like one belongs. Rather, the ‘former responses suggest a desire by those respondents to broaden the remit of who fits and is included in Australian national identity...these respondents challenge racialized and cultural definitions of Australian national identity’ (Kabir, 2011: 257). Still, the issue of national identity is therefore central to these individual’s perception of belonging which thus, also impacts on the forming of their identities. The forming of one’s identity therefore is bound up and related to a sense of belonging and a sense of inclusion within wider society.

### **Social Inclusion versus Social Exclusion; real or perceived?**

Central to this argument in claiming a sense of belonging and a feeling of acceptance are experiences of social inclusion and social exclusion. As alluded to in earlier chapters, respondents in this research felt a great sense of being under siege within Australia. These Muslims too felt that they were continuous targets of government counter-terror policies, negative public discourse and poor public opinion which in turn, creates and maintains a sense of suspect community. This therefore will indeed feed into and impact upon their sense of belonging, their sense of social inclusion and ultimately impact on their identity formation process. A sense of social inclusion may be characterised by different attributes for different individuals. Therefore, what epitomises being included in society is open to interpretation and individual meaning.

For some, it was the negative portrayal in the media that caused upset and discomfort that culminated in the sense of being under siege and excluded;

‘how we [Muslims] are portrayed, like we are all dangerous and evil, it upsets me to think that I am not welcome because of how the media portrays my religion’. <sup>89</sup>

However, for some, there were degrees of levels of exclusion and inclusion. Many felt a sense of inclusion in that they belonged to a “community”; that is a group of like-minded individuals.

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<sup>89</sup> Male, community activist; interview conducted at 3pm on 18 September 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

For those engaged with this research, there was a strong sense of social exclusion evident in various spheres of social life. The sense of social inclusion that did emerge arose when in like-minded company and with those whom these respondents felt familiarity with. Such evidence further serves to question the so-called multicultural nature of Australia.

A number of different conceptualisations and interpretations exist with regard to the term and idea of social exclusion. Julian LeGrand in his writing offers this conceptualisation of what he terms ‘social inclusion’, but upon closer analysis appears to describe social exclusion,

‘a condition where individuals or communities are geographically part of a society but feel that they cannot participate in the normal activities of citizens because, in their perception, a) conditions and institutions exist that actively limit or deny such participation, and b) where societal and/or governmental agencies portray them as “outsiders”’.

The limiting of participation due to existential circumstances as well as the “othering” of a particular community serve as attributes of social exclusion. Indeed, the definition highlights the competing sentiments individuals may experience. For instance, some individuals may feel that they do not belong in this society and have no right to participate because of the nature of the structures that are in place, i.e. political, cultural and social;

‘I am not from the same cultural background as “proper Australians” therefore I am not seen as Australian’.<sup>90</sup>

Others, on the other hand, may feel that social exclusion exists in certain circumstances or institutions but whilst they are aware of it, it may not necessarily affect them, or their sense of belonging;

‘Of course, there exists exclusion, my friend was not invited to a colleague’s house because he was a Muslim and they felt uncomfortable...it is a multi-national office –

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<sup>90</sup> Male, community activist; interview conducted at 9.30am on 17 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

only the Muslim was not invited. He didn't mind..., he laughed...but I know it would annoy and affect other people...that would upset my other friends'.<sup>91</sup>

Essentially, what is evident here is that for some individuals, the sense of exclusion may be absolute whilst for others, it may be relative. This is an important recognition which further draws attention to and questions the perception of belonging, in terms of perceived exclusion and actual exclusion. This is further acknowledged and addressed by the work of Yasmeen (2008). Yasmeen (2008: 9) suggests in any discussion of social inclusion and/or social exclusion must recognise and be aware 'that perceptions of exclusion may be at variance with the reality of exclusion'. To illustrate this point further, Yasmeen (2008) contends that some individuals may feel more excluded than the circumstances or situation deserves. However, whilst making this point, one must be cautious and careful, as a sense of belonging and feeling included is open to individual interpretation and what constitutes social belonging opens a diverse range of attributes according to individual circumstances. Nonetheless, it is still important to acknowledge there may exist discrepancies between the perceived sense of exclusion and the reality. Yasmeen (2010: 9) goes on further to describe the anomalies that exist at the community level in terms of the perceived versus reality of the extent of social exclusion, stating, 'at the community level, the domain community may not be excluding a minority as much as the view entertained by those perceiving such exclusion'. Such anomalies are not rendered invaluable but in fact, the opposite in that these anomalies allow one to foster an understanding of the relationship that exists between the individual and the wider society. A further important point requiring acknowledgement here is that those who perceive themselves as the excluded, may also be characterised by some as the excluders. Minority communities too can exclude wider society through means of the promotion of social and cultural norms which may not be manifest in the mainstream, wider society. Nonetheless, whilst this is an important recognition, this study with the experience of a sample of the Muslim population, as a minority within Australia and their experience of social exclusion as a factor in their identity formation process.

Central to this point therefore, are the realms in which exclusion and inclusion manifest themselves. Within this particular thesis and context, one is looking at a Western environment, in which it has been acknowledged by both Muslims and non-Muslim alike, that differences

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<sup>91</sup> Female, 24, student; interview conducted at 10.30am on 12 December 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during interview.

do exist in terms of the environment. Empirical data collated by the work of Yasmeen (2010) focusing on Western Australia further reiterates such points in her findings, for instance, the dominant sentiment in her findings was that there did exist differences between Muslims and western societies. These differences are indeed those which are perceived by her respondents however. In terms of identity formation, this sense of difference can play a pivotal role in deciphering which identity markers to promote and which to suppress so as to “fit in” and not appear different. It is important to stress here the relationship between what is seen as different and what is the reality. Indeed, in an environment where Muslims are considered “the Other”, there is more likelihood Muslims will emphasise their Muslim-ness as central to their identity. Further related to this conundrum, is the role of discourse, as examined previously in this study, in fostering attitudes and beliefs amongst and towards Muslims and non-Muslims. This discourse and narrative can impact differently on individuals, both at the individual level in terms of personal identity markers as well as at the community level, in terms of the sense of global community or “*umma*”<sup>92</sup> that is united. It is perhaps important to look at how Muslims as a population are affected by counter-terror discourse in their identity formation process at the community level before examining the individual level. This is important as it will stress the tactics employed at community level in dealing with the wider community and will also highlight and help one to understand the degree of community harmony and solidarity that resides. Furthermore, it will offer some clarity as to whether the ideal of an “*umma*” really exists.

### **“*Umma*”; does it exist?**

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<sup>92</sup> Umma is a highly-contested concept that has become politicised in Muslim anti-colonial discourse from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The concept of umma began to compete with nationalist ideologies in colonial and post-colonial periods. This sense of umma conflicted with the colonial ideal of umma characterised by a global unifying sense of belonging and solidarity under the single identity marker of Islam. Mandeville (2002) contends that the Pan-Islamic ideology of some Muslim thinkers during colonial periods was marked by a hegemonic Western discourse that reconstituted the umma as a political community in the Muslim world. Contestations regarding the use of umma in colonial and post-colonial periods is further reiterated in Mandaville, P. 2002. *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma*. London: Routledge. Further reflections are made in Bearman, P. (2005). *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, pp 1201. The difficulties in contextualising Umma are evident due not only to a community that is longing for the peace of the golden era but also recognises that the modern era and contemporary society are very different.



‘I do feel a sense of belonging and unity with fellow Muslims – I feel like we have a special, unique bond...but a single Muslim community, a global one – I am not sure – I am not sure if we can say we have that’. <sup>93</sup>

The concept of Islamic identity has been further complicated, primarily from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century but continuing today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by the ideal of nationalism in the Muslim world. This ideal or umma as it is termed refers to pledging allegiance or having a sense of belonging to a global umma rather than national identities. This ideal however has fostered some animosity between those who are supportive of such a term and those who are not in favour. Umma is an ideal construct which has been politicised as a means of countering or transcending emergent identity markers. Indeed, one’s identity, according to Saeed and Akbarzadeh (2011: 4) ‘is generally a combination of loyalties and responsibilities [...] and therefore carry layers of identity; familial, tribal, provincial, national and Islamic’. However, group identity can change and adapt to diverse social settings, and the aforementioned layers of identity subside to allow for one single thread to emerge as a common denominator which is all inclusive; that of Islam. The emergence of such an identity is most commonly found and most evident in times of angst at a local, national or international level, for instance in relation to violent extremism. For instance, in light of the implementation of new counter-terror laws within the Australian context, there emerged a united condemnation from Muslim organisations at the introduction of such measures.

Further illustrative of this sense of umma are the remarks by one participant, who when referring to anti-Islamic protests, states Muslims cannot be distinguished by ethnicity or ethnic origin;

‘these protests [anti-Muslim rallies in Sydney] are not against particular groups of us but they are against us all...they are anti-Muslim not anti- Lebanese or anti-Iraqi just anti-Muslim – they try to distinguish us at times like this when we cannot be.’ <sup>94</sup>

Following events such as 9/11, Bali bombings or even hearing of foiled terror plots, several Muslim organisations issued united condemnation and disgust at such activity. Whilst these

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<sup>93</sup> Male, Lecturer; interview conducted 13 August 2013 at 3pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>94</sup> Female, community activist conducted on 1 September 2013 in Greenacre, Sydney: notes made during interview.

are examples of Muslims becoming more united during periods of upheaval, the fieldwork also uncovered instances whereby the notion and concept of umma is questionable. One participant, when referring to the idea of a global community identity, was unsure as to the applicability of the term. In her remarks with reference to a prominent state Muslim organisation, she explains why,

‘they [the Muslim organisation in question] would not, and did not contribute to the united press release following those attacks. They are supposed to represent us, be a representative body, by their lack of condemnation and the fact they are an all-inclusive representative body, allegedly, it looked like the Muslim community didn’t want to condemn...no sense of community or no feeling of community solidarity in terms when its needed most, like this’.<sup>95</sup>

The use of the term umma seems inappropriate and unsuitable as the above statements do not appear to reflect a sense of global community. Rather, what is evident here is the desire to achieve a degree of organisational unity and a sense of solidarity in times of upheaval. There is evidence of the coming together of organisations under the banner of Islam and of Muslim when there appears to be an attack on Islam, but the remark that a prominent organisation would not engage is perplexing due to their perceived stature as a highly respectable and prominent Muslim organisation. This draws attention to the differing identity markers and formations that are fostered to serve differing interests. Tension is rife towards those who are seen to be overly friendly with non-Muslims hence surrounding themselves with suspicion as to why such a close relationship. Responses gathered during fieldwork noted caution in engaging with those Muslims who were seen as having a close relationship with non-Muslims due to suspicion concerning the nature of this relationship. These non-Muslims were work colleagues and not engaged nor related to any counter-terrorism activity. These respondents were concerned at the level of engagement of their colleagues with Australian security personnel and questioned the motives behind such a relationship. Concern was raised therefore at levels of engagement outside of Muslim communities; that is with non-Muslims and security personnel. This may be due to the belief that the police community engagement strategy is a means of intelligence gathering more so than the actual building of genuine relationships. This too substantiates the suspect community narrative from the perspective of the Muslim

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<sup>95</sup> Female, community activist; interview conducted 4 September 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made immediately following interview.

respondents. Indeed, it is such attitudes and experiences which influence and help to shape one's identity. Such situations foster the realigning of identity markers to adapt and suit the circumstance. To further stress a previous point, identities are fluid and constantly evolving to the surrounding and influential environment. As a result, therefore, different identity markers become more prominent and come to the fore in different and particular circumstances. This point was identified during fieldwork and has a prominent place in how Muslims residing in Australia manage particular circumstances, and also religious diversity;

‘it depends on where I am, who I am with and what I am doing, in some cases it will be all about being Iraqi for instance with my friends, other times I will be Australian for instance at work, then sometimes I am simply Muslim...it depends’.<sup>96</sup>

‘I am happy to always be Muslim, but the degree to which I am such will change...I am more Muslim at home with my family in that I will not act out of character whilst at work I have more freedom’.<sup>97</sup>

Both the above are interesting in highlighting the strategic essentialism that is in play for some of these participants. For the former, the need to highlight and suppress the most suitable and appropriate identity marker serves as a signifier of the need to feel included, welcomed and a sense of belonging, which was common amongst all respondents. For the latter, similar sentiments were evident but for this participant, there was a desire to fulfil expectations at home with parents that was not felt in more public arenas. Such would suggest perhaps a greater sense of freedom in terms of how one should conduct oneself, in what one would expect to be more uncomfortable surroundings. As well as this, the latter may serve to reiterate the generational differences in terms of what is acceptable for Muslims and what is not.

For a number of respondents, particularly males, there was a need to foster and promote their “Australian-ness” when in the presence of authorities. Trying to seem ‘normal, Australian and not act in any way which may be treated as somehow terrorist or criminal like’ were feelings stressed by these respondents. Young males too were fearful of seeming too religious as such could be misinterpreted as “becoming” radical so they would rather dilute their religiosity in

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<sup>96</sup> Male, 24, banker; interview conducted 5 December 2013 at 9.30am in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>97</sup> Female, 23, retail worker; interview conducted 5 December 2013 at 12noon in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

public spheres. Such a practice further reiterates the idea of strategic essentialism previously mentioned within this thesis, that is used in the context where countering violent extremism creates the notion of a suspect community. Evident here are coping mechanisms as a response to an individual's environmental circumstances. Fieldwork data highlights what these coping mechanisms are and how they are enforced.

### **Coping Mechanisms**

In the period following terror attacks such as 9/11, the Bali Bombings or 7/7, it would be expected that one response would be to distance oneself from the religion and people that was portrayed and perceived as dangerous and extreme. Following the introduction and implementation of the Countering Violent Extremism Initiative as part of the broader fight against terrorism with the community having a central role, as documented in previous chapters, a sense of distrust emerged surrounding Muslim communities as to why they were being utilised in the fight against terror if terrorism and Islam were not synonymous. The indirect impact of such labelling of Australia's Muslims has had profound consequences on their daily lives in terms of conducting everyday activities as well as community and social relations. As well as this, there have been consequences in terms of how Muslims construct their identity as well as their sense of belonging within Australian society. It must be noted however, that in some instances, these consequences have been positive more so than negative in terms of one's identity.

How individuals therefore react to and deal with upheaval in terms of forming and fostering their identity is crucial in unpicking the meaning of identity markers. It may be useful to offer a theoretical approach to understand how marginalised groups, in this instance a sample of Muslim participants residing in Sydney respond to episodes and situations of racism and discrimination; the consequential impact of the implementation of the community based Countering Violent Extremism Initiatives being the central issue here.

One such theoretical framework is that of 'reactive ethnicity' coined by Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) which suggests that when people experience and being a victim of racism, their identification with their ethnic group is increased and becomes stronger. This is evident within the Australian context with a look to both the Irish and Muslims who created their own communities in order to defend themselves against suspicion and discrimination as well as to seek a degree of economic mobility and freedom. Furthermore, the work of Portes and

Rumbaut (2006) contends through their own work of immigrants in the US that youth, in particular, who are from marginalised ethnic groups can intensify their ethnic affiliations and attributes when they either experience or believe they are about to experience discrimination or racism. Data collated through fieldwork supports such an argument and compliments such theoretical framework as it highlights the importance of ethnic and religious ties in times of upset and further marginalisation. For instance, a male participant, stresses the significance of his ethnic ties following counter-terror raids on Muslims of a particular ethnic origin

‘the terror raids that they [the police] done on the Lebanese...that made me feel my ethnic origin more...I am proud to be Lebanese...I felt a need to stand by those men because of what they went through...they are Lebanese and so am I.... I was standing by them...nothing else mattered’. <sup>98</sup>

This young man’s statement makes apparent the importance of ethnic ties during times of either real or perceived discrimination and racism, as well as Islamophobia. Such a remark further reiterates previous arguments concerning the prominence of ethnic identities over that of a universal Islamic identity. Interesting, is that this male did not question whether the police were right or not to carry out the raids; rather the focus for this individual was the fact those on whom the raids were being conducted, shared his ethnic ties and in his words, ‘nothing else mattered’. The significance and the importance of ethnic heritage and ties as a ground for support and shared understanding in times of need and distress. Religious affiliation was also stressed for a number of respondents as offering a sense of comfort in times of upheaval;

‘having fellow believers gives me comfort when our religion is being torn to pieces...I feel a sense of ease when I know I have those who believe in the same as me’. <sup>99</sup>

With all the above remarks, no other identity marker was mentioned nor alluded to, simply ethnic origin for some and religious affiliation for others, and that was the basis for support and solidarity. Indeed, as Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 151) note with regard to this reactive ethnicity

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<sup>98</sup> Male, community leader, Lebanese; interview conducted at 11am on 21 August 2013 in Greenacre, Sydney; notes made during interview.

<sup>99</sup> Female, 30, Politics student; interview conducted at 10.30am on 30 August 2013 in Bankstown, Sydney; notes made during the interview.

that it carries, ‘an affective meaning implying a psychological bond with others that tends to serve psychologically protective functions’.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) suggest that there exists a further component of identity, which like ethnicity, can face realignment and become reactive. Religion too, can be reactive but this only occurs when immigrants begin to suppress their religious identity as a means of fitting into their host nation. Issues arise with such a statement as data appears for the most part, to refute such a claim. Whilst there is evidence of this occurring, with one participant, the majority felt no need to suppress their religious identity as a means of fitting in. Rather, like the process of reactive ethnicities, religious minority identities are ‘prone to the same social processes of discrimination, inequality and external labelling as ethnic and racial groups’ (Nagra, 2011: 429). As such, there are reactions to these in terms of how identities are formed and which traits are given more prominence than others, and these will now be identified and examined below.

### **Distancing**

The distancing of oneself as a coping strategy which is centred upon identity management and boundary maintenance has been identified as a coping mechanism. This strategy involves distancing oneself from terrorists; that is stressing ‘that Islamic terrorists are different from other Muslims and are not following the true meaning of Islam’ (Cherney and Murphy, 2015: 10). This dis-identification serves, according to Cherney and Murphy (2015: 10) to ‘downplay the importance of alienation of particular individuals who are seen as linked to, and constituting, part of one’s broader social group’. Moreover, and importantly, this method of coping and of re-constructing one’s identity, almost indirectly serves to somehow offer justification to the suspicion and the label which surrounds Islam through the confirmation that there are those who have violent intentions, but simultaneously, striving to distance oneself from this group. Such a mechanism in terms of creating a “them and us” within the Muslim population has been identified through fieldwork. For instance, one female community activist states her belief that those who engage in violent extremism could not be more different from real Islam. Furthermore, one participant states that extremism is not part of Islam nor is it welcome,

‘they, those who engage in extremism, they are not Muslims, they do not follow nor practice Islam, they are not true Muslims. Islam is a religion of peace not of massacre and pain that they engage in... they are not Muslims’. <sup>100</sup>

The above statement further reiterates the previous point that, inadvertently, the distancing mechanism serves as a justification for the discourse and attitude of suspect community towards the Muslim population. Furthermore, it creates a “them and us” dichotomy within and amongst the Muslim population. This too raises questions over the ideal of an “umma” and is in striking contrast to the solidarity and collective hurt felt by those who engage in the practice of reactive ethnicities. Distancing then, as a means of boundary maintenance and identity management is a mechanism through which some seek to preserve their identity. Others, however, go a step further and instead of creating a sense of division with other Muslims, reaffirm their Muslim identity and their Islamic faith as a means of coping with the environment in which they find themselves. In this instance, the Australian environment previously alluded to, is characterised by an anti-Muslim discourse, a sense of alienation reported by Muslim participants and a sense of suspect community.

### **Reaffirming Identity**

Cherney and Murphy (2015) suggest one coping mechanism adopted by members of a population during times of distress or upheaval is for them to identify more strongly and more closely with those groups’ beliefs as well as to substantiate and concrete their own beliefs. As a consequence of the implementation of the Countering Violent Extremism programmes as well as the border Australian countering-terrorism framework which seen as targeting the Muslim population, some reaffirmed their Islamic identity and sought to further cement their religious affiliation with Islam. Rousseau and Jamil (2010) further assert that in so doing, there emerges a sense of solidarity among group members. Such affirmations are evident in the data collated during fieldwork which further substantiate this idea of becoming more religious in times of turmoil or upset. This was the case for a number of participants of this research. For instance, one participant became more religious following both global acts of terror as well as the introduction of Australia’s raft of counter-terror measures,

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<sup>100</sup> Male, community leader; interview conducted at 10am on 7 December 2013 in Maroubra, Sydney; notes made during interview.

‘I never once thought of or contemplated taking my scarf off, it is a part of who I am, I am very proud to be Muslim...violence in the name of Islam is wrong...I continue to dress in my clothes because I want people to know there is nothing wrong with me, or my religion, I want people to realise the difference in the real us and the media portrayal of us.’<sup>101</sup>

The above remark too stresses the reaffirmation of faith and the desire to continue practising Islam. Interesting however, is the desire to highlight the differences between what is seen as media represented Islam and what is implied as true Islam. Moreover, within this affirmation, there appears to be two dimensions, this is according to the work of Cherney and Murphy (2015). The first of these dimensions, concerns the societal attitudes towards Islam and the general perception of both Muslims and Islam. As such, the reaffirmation of faith and of identity attempts to portray Muslims as not threatening. Moreover, Breen-Smyth (2014) suggests such verification and affirmation may be due to the desire of some individuals ‘to avoid being perceived as dangerous and threatening, which leads Muslims to become more self-conscious about how their identity is portrayed and perceived’ (Breen-Smyth cited in Cherney and Murphy, 2015: 11). The second dimension, according to Cherney and Murphy (2015), involves a desire to challenge and resist the perceived targeting of the Muslim population in terms of the Countering Violent Extremism programme and the broader counter-terror framework, as suspect community. This has been illustrated previously with respondents stating their desire to continue dressing in their attire to refute these suspect community arguments and to challenge such stereotypes. As a further means of challenging stereotypes, in light of discrimination or social upheaval, some individuals seek to reaffirm their religious affiliation and identity via other means.

A number of research respondents sought to reaffirm their identity by becoming more educated about themselves; that is their religion and their role as followers of Islam. Post 9/11, many respondents recalled the heightened interest in Islam and in Muslims. This interest encouraged and fostered further research into Islam as a religion and what it means to be a Muslim. Subsequent responses below are indicative of this interest and how it resulted in a

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<sup>101</sup> Male, community activist; interview conducted 4 December at 2pm in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.



reaffirmation of faith. One female respondent following an encounter with a British tourist in Sydney, recalls,

‘she was so intrigued as to how a religion could tell someone to kill other people and offer justification for it. I knew Islam did not teach us to do that nor justify it, but I still wanted to learn more. It made me want to know everything about my religion and be proud of it.’<sup>102</sup>

The above is important as it illustrates the desire to counter negative discourse whilst simultaneously strengthening one’s faith and religious identity.

Perhaps most interesting, are those who convert to Islam following global terror attacks. Illustrative of this is one female respondent who following 9/11, became intrigued by Islam and sought to learn more;

‘when 9/11 happened, I was like how can a religion allow for this, encourage and justify it...I could not understand it and I wanted to, I really wanted to. So, I began to research it and after some time I began to see that Islam was about love, respect, peace, care and kindness not violence and killing people. I found an inner peace with it. So, I became a Muslim...I am extremely proud of who I am in terms of my religion and of the religion I follow and practise’.<sup>103</sup>

Whilst few participants felt a need to step away from Islam and suppress their Islamic identity, the majority of respondents re-affirmed their faith collectively gaining a sense of pride and happiness from their being Muslim and a follower of Islam. In times of challenge and social unrest, it appears that the identity marker which is most under threat is promoted and becomes a marker of solidarity, unity and cohesion. The introduction of the Countering Violent Extremism measures as well as the broader counter-terrorism framework, have impacted significantly on the identity formation of Australia’s Muslims. Throughout this thesis, the feeling of constant scrutiny is clear from respondents. This sense of suspicion, for a few respondents was a powerful force in fostering withdrawal and the diluting of faith. Their

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<sup>102</sup> Female, student; interview conducted at 9am on 9 December 2013 in Sydney CBD; notes made during interview.

<sup>103</sup> Female, 21; interview conducted at 1pm on 19 December 2013 in Bondi, Sydney; notes made during interview.

unease and discomfort with their visibility as Muslims led them to suppress their Muslim identity markers and take a step back from Islam. This was evident at Islamic events such as Islamic Society week at a university where these individuals did not want to participate as it would associate them with Islam – the very thing they wanted to dissociate. For the majority of respondents however, there was great pride in taking part in Islamic events; it was an opportunity not only to celebrate this religion but also to offer an insight to those willing to engage and learn Islam. Such respondents seemed to be overcome by a newfound love and appreciation for their religion. Indeed, a further consequence of terrorism and the subsequent counter-terror measures are the conversions to Islam. Nonetheless, in this instance, the discourse surrounding Muslims, terrorism, counter-terrorism and violent extremism has led to the creation and promotion of a suspect community narrative and everyday life experience, but has not led to the suppression of this identity which is often attacked; rather the promotion and reaffirmation of this faith with a strong sense of pride.

## **Conclusion**

Muslims and Australia have a long history. Ranging from the early cameleers to the present day Australian Muslims; Muslims have and continue to play a role in Australian society. Within this Muslim contingent of the wider Australian population, lies a heterogeneous group with a diverse range of ethnic, cultural and linguistic traits. It is these identity markers, within the Australian context which play a significant role in deciphering Muslim identity.

Further in relation to the identity formation of Muslims within the Australian context, are the concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion. Throughout this thesis, it has been reiterated that participants of this research feel under siege in terms of being under constant watch and this creates a suspect community which surrounds them. This leaves a sense of being unwelcome and unwanted in society. Such social exclusion has significant implications for how an individual integrates into society and in turn, how they perceive themselves in terms of a sense of belonging, which as we have seen throughout this thesis in terms of literature and fieldwork, has a significant impact on one's identity formation.

For the participants of this research, in terms of forming and portraying one's identity within the Australian context, within a climate of suspicion and scrutiny, coping mechanisms were introduced and implemented. For a minority of respondents, the sense of constant suspicion because of their religious beliefs and cultural traits was overwhelming. As a result, therefore, such individuals felt forced to dilute and suppress their Islamic identity as a means of survival. Such feelings are a clear indication of the impact of this anti-Muslim discourse on how Australian Muslims conduct themselves and wish to be seen. However, these individuals comprised a minority of respondents. For the majority of respondents in this research, the anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic narrative, with the sense of alienation and marginalisation, did not drive these individuals to become less pious or visible, but rather to be more forthcoming about their religion in terms of their Muslim appearance as well as Muslim or Islamic traits, for example practising cultural traditions and speaking in mother tongue. Adopting this mentality and engaging in these "native" activities highlights these individuals desire to re-affirm their faith as well as to believe and practice, stronger and deeper. The introduction of counter-terror measures such as the countering violent extremism initiative as discussed throughout, whilst strengthening the anti-Muslim discourse within wider Australian society, fostered a consolidation and manifestation of faith of the majority of respondents. An urge and desire to defend one's faith against slander and negativity was central in their responses. Moreover, there was an overwhelming sense of need amongst these individuals to educate others about Islam as a religion and way of life as well as Muslims. These Muslims, with a potent sense of pride with being Muslim, wished to invite others to learn and appreciate "true Islam". These participants were extremely proud of their heritage and of who they were; Muslim, Australian, Lebanese, male, female, community activist, welder, teacher: all of the traits and identity markers that contributed to their identity. Despite their religious affiliation or cultural background being targeted, these individuals felt a duty to withstand this condemnation and suspicion as a means of defending their religion and refuting the suspect community narrative.

Within this thesis, the negative connotations that are associated with being Muslim are crystallised, ranging from an individual who is incompatible with Australian society to someone who is trying to dilute the Australian "way of life", to a rapist, to a terrorist. The discourse adopted by the media as well as the Howard government epitomised in the counter-terror measures implemented during his time as well as his influence on subsequent governments and their policies such as these countering violent extremism measures, as stressed by respondents of this research and highlighted throughout these chapters, directly

impacted on the lives of Muslims residing in Australia. The sense of being under siege and constant suspicion was unanimous amongst respondents. It was how this impacted on their identity formation and the subsequent coping mechanisms adopted, which differed. As already discussed, some participants felt a need to dilute their Muslim-ness in order to “fit in” and deal with the environment in which they find themselves. Others, on the other hand however, were overcome with a sense of pride and love for their religion; a new found, re-affirmation of faith and culture that could not be diluted but rather was to be praised and welcomed. Therefore, the suspect community narrative resulting from and coinciding with the raft of counter-terror measures, as stressed by respondents, caused some to suppress certain trait – mostly Islamic or Muslim, whilst others fostered and promoted theirs. Indeed, counter-terror measures and its counterparts such as discourse have, according to participants of this research, directly impacted on the identity formation of these participants in Sydney, be it either positively or negatively.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

This research was developed to explore and identify how those Muslims who participated in this study in Sydney perceive the countering violent extremism initiatives adopted by the Australian government and how such measures impact on their lives within Australian society. This study was concerned with the perception held by the Muslim population towards these counter-terror measures in terms of whether this sector of the population saw such measures as justified. The context in which these measures were introduced and how they operate was also a focus of this study. This thesis was concerned with the perceptions held about discourses and their impact on identity formation. This study sought to identify the context in which such a measure was adopted and justified. The literature within this field is abundant and offers an understanding of counter-terror in the Australian context. This research seeks to contribute to this field through an offering of the impact of these measures on Australia's largest Muslim population which could offer an insight into best practice models and foster an appreciation of what works and what is less beneficial. This chapter will offer a synthesis of the material within this thesis resulting in the addressing of the research questions this thesis was concerned with. The policy implications of this work will then be addressed following which will be the limitations of this research and also its contribution to the field of terrorism studies.

#### **Research Aims and Empirical Findings**

Within this thesis, the main empirical findings are chapter specific. These findings were gathered to address the main aim of this research through the investigation of specific research questions. The research sought to investigate the above and as such was concerned with the following research questions;

1. Does the radical Islam discourse affect counter-radicalisation initiatives in terms of the target group such as Muslim youths?

The implementation of countering violent extremism initiatives within Australia was made possible through the anti-Muslim tone and discourse fostered and promoted within wider Australia. The narrative and language of Howard served as a means of justification for the

implementation for such measures. Both implicit and explicit anti-Muslim, fear-mongering and negative discourse was utilised in discourse concerning counter-terrorism. As such, the discourse adopted served as a justification for the implementation of countering violent extremism measures which, because of this discourse, targeted the Muslim population. Muslims were used as the justification for the introduction of countering violent extremism programmes; firstly, because they were regarded as the problem and secondly; not only were they regarded as the problem but also as the solution to the problem in terms of their community knowledge as a source of intelligence to and for authorities.

## 2. Is there active community support for the mission of these CVE Initiatives?

A central focus of this research concerned how the Muslim population perceived the introduction and the implementation of these countering violent extremism initiatives. Central to this was the discourse surrounding these initiatives and their implementation. The support for such programmes was based on the justification and need for such measures. For Muslim participants of this research, the anti-Muslim discourse culminating in the sense of being under siege and ultimately the creation and maintenance of a “suspect community” meant there was little support for these measures. Rather, participants felt that because of the negative narrative, language and discourse, it was the Muslim population who were being used as scape-goats for these counter-measures and therefore were unsupportive of these measures. This is a significant finding due to the point that community support is regarded as central in the fight against terrorism. As such therefore, it would appear that these counter-terror measures are counter-productive as they serve to further marginalise the very individuals they seek to engage. A community based strategy with community engagement as a central focus cannot work effectively without community support.

## 3. How do the countering violent extremism initiatives affect and impact the lives of Muslims in Sydney?

The discourse adopted culminating in a sense of being under siege as well as the maintenance of a suspect community has directly impacted on the Muslim population. Respondents reiterated that the discourse framing the Muslim population as suspect caused them discomfort and uneasiness. The discourse adopted culminating in Muslims as suspect impacted significantly on their identity formations in terms of the degree of comfort felt in portraying their Islamic identity markers. For some, dealing with the suspect community narrative meant

diluting their identity; that is suppressing those markers which they felt would be correlated with Muslim and therefore suspect. For some this included the removal of Islamic dress, the shaving of beards, the changing of one's name to a more "anglicised" version - such caused a great deal of anxiety and upheaval for these individuals seeking to live in a so called multicultural society. For others, however, the suspect community narrative bolstered by counter-terror policies particularly community based programmes aimed at countering violent extremism fostered a re-asserting of their religious beliefs and a new, reinvigorated sense of passion for their faith. These individuals did not suppress their identity markers but rather fostered and promoted them; these community based programmes and the environment which consequently emerged was the basis of this re-affirmation of identity -a desire to prove perhaps that Islam is about peace not violence. With this too, came a greater sense of pride towards their Islamic identity markers; a desire to "protect" their religion and those traits associated. For participants, therefore, the implementation of these countering violent extremism programmes did have a profound impact on their lives; for some this impact was positive whilst for others, discomfort and discontent ensued. Therefore, it is vital to understand the impact of government policy on communities so as not to further marginalise and alienate these already polarised populations.

Participants felt anger towards the perceived permissibility of Islamophobia within Australia with the majority stressing the role of the Australian government and the media in promoting and maintaining such a discourse. Within this Islamophobic narrative was negative stereotyping with connotations such as "terrorist", "rapist", "foreign" and "violent". This is reiterated by work of Gleeson (2014) who found the use of negative adjectives to describe Muslim communities. According to research participants, the use of such derogatory terms towards them caused great upset and anxiety as well as created further divisions within Australian society. With the use of such terms, also came the further promotion and maintenance of the suspect community narrative and discourse. The sense of suspect community was a phrase continuously reiterated by respondents of this research. It was felt, that counter-terror measures were justified on the basis of the use of the Muslim population as a difficult grouping within society that needed monitored and legislated against (Gleeson, 2014). The suspect community discourse according to participants allowed the promotion and implementation of Australia's counter-terror measures and the acceptance of these within the wider Australian public. Again, the use of the "them versus us" dichotomy as well as the "Other" as a narrative fostered the alienation and stereotyping of the Muslim population as a

suspect community. Aly (2012) too cites such a finding concerning the polarising nature of this dichotomy within Australia, leading to the questioning of the makeup and composition of Australian society, when concerning Muslims.

From analysis of research findings, participants feel that they reside in an Islamophobic environment. As such, participants referred to introducing what they termed “coping mechanisms”. Such measures according to participants were utilised as a means of dealing with and coping with the environment in which they found themselves. For these participants, these mechanisms allowed them to feel comfortable again in an environment characterised by fear, hostility and suspicion towards them and their communities. A concurrent finding was noted by Kabir (2011) stressing the hiding of one’s Muslimness as a means of feeling comfortable in one’s surroundings and therefore “fitting in”. For instance, the shaving of a beard or the changing of a name to a more anglicised name, for example from Mohammed to Michael, was one example cited by respondents. Ironically, rather than a desire to suppress the identity marker that was a source of angst and suspicion, the majority of participants felt a sense of pride towards their Islamic faith and such an environment therefore fostered a reaffirmation of faith for these individuals. In this light, the counter-terror measures adopted within Australia caused a context in which the religion that is viewed as problematic for many was further adopted by its followers.

Indeed, the context and security environment in which Australia finds itself or at least promotes through discourse has fostered a hostile polarising society. As such, respondents of this research initiated coping mechanisms as a means through which to engage in everyday activities as well as with wider Australian society. The implementation of Australia’s counter-terrorism measures and their counter-terrorism mandate impacted significantly on Muslims residing in the Sydney, in this case. For some, there was a need to dilute their visible-ness as Muslims and as followers of Islam as a means of continuing their day-to-day lives with more ease and less discomfort. As well as this, such individuals became more knowledgeable regarding their faith with a new-found enthusiasm and zeal for their faith. , The use of security terms such as “terrorism”, “violent extremism”, “radicalisation” and “extremist” were adopted and used by those in power as a means of creating and maintaining a suspect community without adequately addressing the definitional complexities surrounding such was a point continuously alluded to by respondents in terms of the hegemonic perception of terrorism and violent extremism.



The discourse adopted and promoted by the Australian government, particularly within the Howard era, as well as the media served as a medium through which to identify the Muslim population as dangerous thus resulting in fear and tension towards this population. Emerging then was the creation of a “suspect community” through the choice of language and narrative that the Australian government created and maintained through such a discourse. Participants felt that a degree of ignorance was evident amongst government personnel and some community practitioners in terms of the objectives of these CVE programmes. Participants felt that this ignorance was due to a lack of knowledge and understanding surrounding these concepts and how to engage with them. Due to this lack of awareness and comprehension, some participants were concerned that these countering violent extremism programmes may not have been meeting the aims of their programme nor the needs of the community. Indeed, great attention was placed on the lack of clarity evident in discussions surrounding the concepts and polarisation of concepts of moderate and extremist or radical. Interestingly, findings highlight a great deal of angst with regard to these terms but also the somewhat subconscious use of these terms by community members who simultaneously reject the use of these words comparatively. Again, it is this ignorance with regard to the meaning of such subjective and value laden concepts which contributed to the negative discourse surrounding Muslims. It was this discourse therefore, which was used as a means through which to justify the draconian counter-terror measures that were reactionary in nature, and indeed, the implementation of these CVE programmes.

The implementation of these CVE programmes, in an environment characterised by suspicion consequential of the Howard era, as a means of countering violent extremism sought to collaborate and engage with local communities to combat the perceived threat. The nature of this engagement was fraught with negativity in terms of the time period in which this engagement began as well as the motivation behind such engagement; for participants, there was great concern that such engagement was solely interested in intelligence gathering and not building relationships and trust between communities and authorities. Despite official rhetoric that such programmes were not targeted at the Muslim population, that applicants and recipients were from the Muslim population serves to question this objective. The majority of participants were wary of these programmes in terms of the exact nature of these programmes; what was their purpose? A contributing factor to this was the perceived lack of communication and collaboration between those at the top with local communities. How these programmes were to be rolled out in theory according to government was different to concerns on the ground

as well as how local communities perceived rolling out such programmes. Practitioners of these CVE programmes recalled the lack of communication concerning the implementation and the management of these initiatives. Such serves to illustrate the structural weaknesses within the Australian government in terms of the differences in theory at government level with the mechanisms through which these programmes can be implemented at community level. Such a finding further alluded to previous assertions within this thesis that the Australian government merely implemented such programmes to create the perception that a plan was in place to fight terrorism; and terrorism that was immersed within local Muslim communities.

The environment within Australia for these participants was epitomised by fear, stereotyping, suspicion, Islamophobia and exclusion. So-called multicultural Australia failed to welcome, care and provide a sense of belonging to individuals for whom, Australia is home. This environment, created and maintained by the Australian government particularly under Howard, is one whereby the Muslim people are marginalised and polarised due to the discourse that surrounds them.

This research highlights the profound impact counter-terrorism measures can have on local communities. As a result of this research, one can become more aware of the difficulties facing both governments and those at grass-roots in fighting extremism. For governments, there is a need to protect their people and prevent terrorism. Within Australia however, this need to protect and prevent is exaggerated as the justification for these new counter-terrorism measures. For local communities, this study stresses the complex manoeuvring that is required in order to protect oneself from suspicion despite the negative discourse and the acceptance of local organisations of funding to fight terrorism. Through this piece of research, the tactics that were employed as a means through which the Australian governments could implement their raft of counter-terror measures are stressed. A political climate characterised by a fear of multiculturalism, the desire to maintain the status-quo as in a white Australia and a disgust at inclusiveness led to the successful introduction of counter-terrorism policies. This thesis has unearthed and crystallised the anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic undercurrent of counter-terror policies that has manifested into the marginalisation of a minority group. In addition, through fieldwork, the complex and difficult challenges faced by minority, marginalised groups become clear. Participants in this research draw awareness to the coping mechanisms that are adopted as a means through which to deal with such circumstances. This research is the first piece to consult Muslims in Sydney and seek their thoughts and attitudes on a policy that views them both as the problem and as the solution. The collation of this primary data is therefore crucial

in drawing attention to the environment in which these countering violent extremism measures were adopted and how the population these targeted, deal with the effect of being a suspect community because of this. Moreover, this piece of research is a qualitative piece that investigates and highlights the impact of the government funded countering-violent extremism initiatives on Muslims in Sydney.

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, getting access to participants was extremely challenging. With hindsight, more caution would have been taken with those individuals who gave their word in acting as gatekeeper and providing access to participants but did not fulfil this promise, as counting on these individuals led to a valuable lesson in trust and also time management. In light of this, a longer period in the field would allow further in-depth investigation and gathering of data. Due to time, this research was unable to fully engage with those recipients of these grants in terms of conducting one-to-one interviews. The mindset and mentality of being honest about who I was and my purpose was crucial in allowing the in-depth study that this research was based upon. The moral position adopted at the beginning of this research remains, in that one must question the motivations and justifications for stereotyping and racism and seek to uncover the hidden meaning and purpose behind or framing government or media narratives and discourse. With this however, is a recognition that since the time of fieldwork, the security environment has changed in terms of the actual level and veracity of threat posed by militant Islam in Australia. What remains, however, is the anti-Muslim and anti-immigration discourse that serves as the justification for the implementation of these counter-terror measures.

### **Developments in this field and further research**

A look to the U.K. points at research and studies into how counter-terrorism policies and measures are perceived by local communities, particularly Muslim and how such programmes impact on these communities. O'Toole (2011), Fieschi (2013) and Awan (2012) evaluated the Prevent strategy and concluded that it has been counter-productive; in that rather than addressing needs it has further polarised and stigmatised Muslim communities into a suspect community. Thomas (2010) examined in his work why Prevent as a strategy had a Muslim audience, if as a policy, was not aimed at Muslim communities. Choudray and Fenwick (2011) too stressed concern with Prevent and its applicability to Muslims in Britain. Northern Ireland too offers an example of continuous research into the nature of community relations

and how identity and identity formation are essentialised according to particular contexts and needs (Choudray and Fenwick, 2011). This is an extremely important aspect of this research as it stresses the dilution of multicultural society; that is the perception from some that minorities are to assimilate. Although this research was concerned with Australia, there is a need for further research and scholarship on a global scale and a desire to address ignorance in terms of knowledge regarding other cultures. A number of scholars have alluded to this such as Cheruvalli-Contractor and Scott-Baumann (2017) and assert that universities, for instance, could be centres of future direction in the field. More in-depth teaching of Islamic studies in schools and universities would be beneficial in educating both Muslims and the wider populous on Islamic culture and values. Such a practice would seek to improve community relations and ultimately multiculturalism (Scott-Baumann and Cheruvalli-Contractor, 2017).

With reference to the Australian context, this research was not concerned with the effectiveness of countering violent extremism programmes. Rather, this thesis sought to identify and highlight how these programmes and initiatives were perceived by a proportion of Muslims residing in Sydney. As well as this, this research was interested in how the implementation of such programmes with a Muslim audience, impacted on the daily lives of that sample who participated in this study. Indeed, although difficult to achieve, an evaluation of these programmes in terms of whether or not they met the objectives set out by the Australian government, would be beneficial in further highlighting the structural differences that are present. To reiterate, however, this is difficult as a number of authors have alluded to. While evaluation of CVE policies and measures is crucial to improving knowledge and establishing best practices, there is currently no consensus on standardised CVE evaluation practice (Romaniuk & Chowdhury Fink, 2012). Furthermore, argues Borum and Horgan (2012: 5) this lack of evaluation is a critical deficiency in the CVE effort. To move forward, Romaniuk (2015: v) suggests that more precision and specificity is needed when defining CVE and classifying and evaluating CVE programming. Nevertheless, this research seeks to address this deficiency by offering an insight into how those who are in receipt of such measures perceive them in terms of their need, their objectives and their impact. Evident throughout this thesis from such individuals is that, such measures when buoyed by an inflammatory discourse, impact negatively. Indeed, as illustrated by respondents, such measures can be said to be counter-productive in that they inflame rather than mend community relations, and as such, cause those communities with whom engagement is sought, to refuse to engage. There is little independent evaluation or evidence-based research to suggest that social cohesion or prevention initiatives

have led to an actual reduction in violent extremism anywhere in the Western world; moreover, their broadly targeted nature risks stigmatising the communities which they target (Romaniuk, 2016). In a sense therefore, this thesis seeks to draw awareness to and appreciation of the negative receipt and therefore consequences of these counter-terror measures, and in doing so, indirectly, suggest the inefficiency of Australian countering violent extremism measures. In moving forward, the method of successfully evaluating such measures is currently unclear, but understanding the impact of such measures is a positive first step in highlighting the consequences. Essentially, for CVE to be lasting and efficient, past lessons should be integrated into current and future planning.

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## Appendix 1

### UCC Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC)

#### ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

Name of applicant	Claire McCaffrey	Date	29/05/13
Contact Details	Phone 02868628123	Email	C.mccaffrey21@ucc.ie
Department/Unit	Theology and Religious Studies		
Title of project	The Effectiveness of Counter-Radicalisation Initiatives for Muslim Youth in Sydney.		

		YES	NO
1	Do you consider that this project has significant ethical implications?	x	
2	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	x	
3	Will participation be voluntary?	x	
4	Will you obtain informed consent in writing from participants?	x	
5	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason, and (where relevant) omit questionnaire items to which they do not wish to respond?	x	
6	Will data be treated with full confidentiality / anonymity (as appropriate)?	x	
7	If results are published, will anonymity be maintained and participants not identified?	x	

8	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)?	x	
9	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?		x
10	Will your participants include schoolchildren (under 18 years of age)?		x
11	Will your participants include people with learning or communication difficulties?		x
12	Will your participants include patients?		x
13	Will your participants include people in custody?		x
14	Will your participants include people engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug taking; illegal Internet behaviour)?		x
15	Is there a realistic risk of participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress?		x
16	If yes to 15, has a proposed procedure, including the name of a contact person, been given? (see no 23)		

17. Aims of the project:

The aim of this project is to examine the effectiveness of counter-radicalisation initiatives for Muslim youths in Sydney. This project aims to strengthen the scholarly literature on Islamist militancy in the Australian context as it is regarded weak and lacking primary data.

18. Brief description and justification of Methods:

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will be used in this project. Focus groups, unstructured interviews and observation will be used in this research. These methods are chosen as they will allow more in-depth responses and explanations to be given, e.g. from government as to why particular legislation or programme was introduced.

19. Participants:

Muslim youth participants will be consulted voluntarily through access to youth groups and Muslim organisations. Previously established contacts will act as gatekeepers in granting access also. Government representatives, community leaders, religious leaders and security personnel will be accessed through Australian university linkages.

20. Statement of ethical issues:

Ethical issues such as consent will be addressed by providing informed consent to those participating voluntarily in this study without coercion, threats or persuasion. Issues of confidentiality will be addressed by allowing those wanting to remain anonymous to do so.

21. Arrangements for informing participants regarding study:

Participants taking part in this study will be voluntary. Participants will be made fully aware of the nature of this study through initial contact and subsequently through access to the informed consent form. Participants will also be debriefed at the end of each interview.

22. How will informed consent be obtained?

A form stating the nature of the study, its aims and objectives will be forwarded to those who would be beneficial to contribute to this study. It will seek voluntary, optional anonymous participation in this study.

23. Outline of debriefing process:

Participants will be debriefed by providing them with an explanation of the study and reassurance that their involvement will remain anonymous and confidential if requested. Participants experiencing psychological distress will have access to counselling.

Informed Consent Form:

**Purpose of this study:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of counter-radicalisation initiatives for Muslim youths in Sydney, Australia.

**What will this study involve?** This study will involve two interviews over a 9-month period.

**Why have you been asked to take part?** You have been asked to take part as you may offer an insight into the research questions that this research is concerned with.

**Do you have to take part?** No, participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you agree to take part, you will sign an informed consent form which you keep and also an information sheet. You have the option to withdraw your participation before the study begins or discontinuing after data collection has begun.

**Will participation in the study be kept confidential?** Yes, I will ensure that no clues appear to your identity. However, due to the nature of the study, I have a duty of care therefore anything which may be a cause for concern will be forwarded on to the relevant person.

**What will happen to information given?** Information given during the study will be kept from third parties. The information will be kept confidential for the duration of the study and individual details will not be disclosed.

**What will happen to the results?** The results will be presented in my thesis and will be seen by my supervisor, a second-marker and an external marker. This thesis may be read by future students and may be published in a research journal.

**What are possible disadvantages of taking part?** I envisage no negative outcomes from participation in this study. It is possible that due to the nature of this study, it may cause some distress.

**What if there is a problem?** I will discuss with you after the interview how you found the experience. If you are feeling distressed you can contact your teacher/youth leader/community leader.

**Who has reviewed this study?** Approval for studies such as this one must be given by the Social Research Ethics Committee before they can take place.

**Any further questions?** If you need any further information you can contact me: Claire McCaffrey

If you agree to take part in this study, please sign the attached consent form.

## APPENDIX 2

### *The Effectiveness of Counter-Radicalisation Initiatives for Muslims in Sydney*

#### **Consent Form**

The project *The Effectiveness of Counter-Radicalisation Initiatives for Muslim Youth in Sydney* is an academic research project based in University College Cork (UCC) which examines the discourse around this topic and the usefulness of counter-radicalisation initiatives in combating radicalisation through an investigation of:

4. the discourse surrounding the topic of radicalisation and related terms such as 'radical' and 'counter-radicalisation' and its impact on communities
5. the responses from a range of stakeholders such as Muslim youth, government representatives and community leaders to counter-radicalisation initiatives

To help the researcher in achieving these aims of research, interviews are being conducted with a range of stakeholders such as Muslim youth aged 18 and above, government representatives and community leaders in community centres and government agencies. The duration of these interviews may range from 1-2 hours depending on the interviewees' engagement and availability. The only circumstance in which anonymity cannot be guaranteed is where a respondent makes revelations regarding the planning of illegal activity.

#### **Project Researcher**

Claire McCaffrey (PhD)

#### **Contact Details**

##### **Enrolled at:**

Study of Religions Department  
College of Arts  
O'Rahilly Building  
University College Cork  
Ireland  
E-mail: [112221077@ucc.ie](mailto:112221077@ucc.ie)  
Tel: 0414322953

I agree to be interviewed as part of the project **The Effectiveness of Counter-Radicalisation Initiatives for Muslims in Sydney, Australia**. The purpose and aim of the project has been explained to me and I understand it. I am participating voluntarily. I give permission for my interview to be recorded. I understand that the recording and transcript of the interview will be kept in a safe place and only the project researcher will have access to it.

I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be used in reports, publications or other forms of communication arising from this project. Unless stated otherwise, my name and other identifying details will be kept anonymous in any reports, publications or other publications arising from this project. This means that my name would not be attached to them or made available to the public or to other researchers.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time whether before it starts or during the interview. I understand that I do not have to answer questions that I do not wish to answer.

Signature of Interviewee ..... Date.....

Name (block capitals).....

I agree to respect to the wishes of participants regarding the conditions outlined above

Signature of Interviewer..... Date.....



**UCC**

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire  
University College Cork, Ireland

Claire McCaffrey,  
Study of Religions Department

6<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Oifig an Leas - Uachtaráin Taighde  
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Dear Claire,

Thank you for submitting your research (project entitled: The effectiveness of Counter-Radicalisation Initiatives from Muslim Youth in Sydney) to SREC for ethical perusal. I am pleased to say that we see no ethical impediment to your research as proposed and we are happy to grant approval.

We wish you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Sean Hammond  
Chair of Social Research Ethics Committee

Professor Anita R. Maguire BSc PhD CChem MRSC  
Vice President for Research and Innovation

Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh  
National University of Ireland, Cork